

**NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION OF VALUES IN TAMIL EPIC
TRADITION FILMS OF A.P.NAGARAJAN**

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BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that project report titled, **“NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION OF VALUES IN TAMIL EPIC TRADITION FILMS OF A.P.NAGARAJAN** submitted for the award of M.Phil Communication to the University of Madras is a record of the original project work done by me.

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Narrative Strategies and Communication of Values through Tamil Epic Films of A P Nagarajan

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ABSTRACT

Story telling is a common activity in every culture. Most people have their own favourite stories from childhood to share. And often, these tales are both fascinating and frightening when we come to know their underlying meanings. The main basis for any Indian story could be the Omni-present Indian Epics.

Movies are our sagas, our myths, our touchstones, and our collective cultural heritage. They also help us teach ourselves and our children about Indian values.

This study aims to examine the Indian Epic traditions and how these have set the base for the Tamil movies of the 1960s and what are the values communicated through them.

Research Questions of the Study:

- **How have the Epic stories taken different shapes in Tamil movie narratives of 1960s era?**
- **How have the characters been portrayed in the movies?**
- **What are the values that are being communicated to us through the Epic tradition Tamil movies of 1960s?**

This study is focussed on three Epic genre movies of the very renowned director who is considered to be the master of Epic cinema, A.P. Nagarajan. There has been little or no research in the field of Tamil Epic genre movies in terms of its narrative strategies and storytelling techniques. This study critically analyses the popular plots of Tamil movies of the 1960s and examine their nature. The study also seeks to understand the values the movies intend to give its audience, by applying the narrative analysis methodology.

Keywords: Tamil Cinema, Epics, Genres, Narrative strategies

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

Indian Cinema is one of the vibrant in the world. It is acclaimed not just for the sake of entertainment but also for its subtle themes and narratives within the Cinema text. The narrative organization combined with its way of storytelling and the other aspects of *mise-en-scene* makes it the best one on screen. Christopher Nolan, one of the very notable directors of the Hollywood in an interview said, “A good movie not just has interesting characters but also endearing ones who will want us to empathize with them through their cinematic journey. This lets us, as the audience, to perpetuate and embellish on the film with our own imaginations”

This may fit the bill for a Hollywood movie. But when it comes to an Indian movie particularly A Tamil one, there is something beyond this that destines a good movie. It is the omni-presence of an *Epic* story in it. *Epics* are the stories which function as the manuals for mankind right from the day they originated. They teach us morals and values beyond the history of yesteryears. Drawing on the story traditions of Indian epics and *puranas* and imbued with the emotional piety of regional devotional traditions and Epic genre films have been a part of Indian cinema since its beginning. (L. Babb, S.Wadley, 1997)

1.2 HINDU EPIC LITERATURE

Eventually Hindus started to follow the impulse of the Sumerians, who wrote poetic stories that focused Godly powers. Sumerians belonged to one of the very ancient civilization and historical region in southern Mesopotamia, modern-day southern Iraq, during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. The *Epic of Gilgamesh*,

an epic poem from Mesopotamia, is considered the world's first truly great work of literature. The literary history of Gilgamesh begins with five Sumerian poems about 'Bilgamesh' (Sumerian for 'Gilgamesh'), king of Uruk. These independent stories were used as source material for a combined epic. (S.Kramer, 1963) The ideology behind creating such epics was to make people follow the ideals of life. Hence the ideology was alone borrowed by the Indians and thus *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* was made.

1.3 RAMAYANA

The *Ramayana* is one of the great Hindu epics. It is ascribed to the Hindu sage Valmiki and forms an important part of the Hindu literature considered to be *itihāsa*. The Ramayana is one of the two great epics of Hinduism, the other being the Mahabharata . It depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal father, the ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal wife, and the ideal king.

The name Ramayana is a, epic translating to "Rama's Journey".

The Ramayana consists of 24,000 verses in seven books (kāṇḍas) and 500 cantos (sargas), and tells the story of Rama (an avatar of the Hindu supreme-god Vishnu), whose wife Sita is abducted by Ravana, the king of Lanka (current day Sri Lanka). Incidentally the first letter of every 1000 verses (total 24) makes the Gayatri mantra. Thematically, the Ramayana explores human values and the concept of dharma.

1.4 VALUES OF RAMAYANA

- The relationship between *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (materialism), *Kama* (pleasure) and *Moksha* (liberation) is been imbibed through different stages of Rama's life through Ramayana.

- The importance of man being wedded to one woman throughout his life has been explained throughout the epic.
- Adherence to truth and the need to honour elder's words has been followed by the characters of Ramayana.
- Not accepting any booty that comes in an unjust way
- The futility of getting swayed by dubious attractions has been taught.
- The importance of fighting atrocities against women
- Divinely love transcends all barriers of caste and creed.

The above are the morals and values that are being taught to us through the Epic and also much more could arise when being discussed. No wonder the Ramayana remains as one of the grammar-like books for Hindu mythology to denote as to what to be followed for achieving a righteous life. It continues to inspire much more millions and among them also remain our Indian film makers. "Influence of Ramayana and other epics can be seen in almost every Indian film" (S. Munshi, 2010) One of the very eminent Soap-opera makers of the Indian prime time, Ekta Kapoor of Balaji Telefilms in an interview said that "*Har k Ghar mein ek Ram hein*" (In every house there can be a man who can be associated with Ram of the Ramayana)

1.5 MAHABARATHA

The Mahabharata is the longest known epic poem and has been described as "the longest poem ever written". Its longest version consists of over 100,000 *shloka* or over 200,000 individual verse lines (each shloka is a couplet), and long prose passages. About 1.8 million words in total, the Mahabharata is roughly ten times the length of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined, or about four times the length of the Ramayana. Besides its epic narrative of the *Kurukshetra* War and the fates of the *Kaurava* and the *Pandava* princes, the *Mahabharata* contains philosophical and devotional material. Among the principal works and stories in the *Mahabharata* is

the *Bhagavad Gita*, the story of *Damayanti*, which is an abbreviated version of the Ramayana. The author of Mahabaratha is said to be *Veda Vyasa*.

1.6 VALUES OF MAHABARATHA

There are a number of characters who play their roles in the epic of Mahabaratha whom we individually remember for their distinguished features and attributes. There is usually a say that, “ The two epics of Hindu mythology among which one is the grammar of how to live (Ramayana) and the other one is to teach how not to live (Mahabaratha) ”

- Krishna: **The end does not always justify the means.** The avatar of Lord Vishnu, Krishna used every unfair trick in the book to win the war. His lies and tricks did win the war in favour of the Pandavas, but they lost too much in the bargain. Finally, Hastinapur was a land of wailing widows and orphaned children. The Pandavas themselves were left childless. No wrong means do not justify a right end.
- Bhishma: **Selflessness is not always a virtue.** The great-grandfather and brave warrior of the *Hastinapur* royal family had several chances to save his kingdom and people. He was repeatedly beseeched by his step mother to take over the kingdom and get married, but he refused to break his vow of celibacy. Had he not been so self-righteous, the Great War could have been avoided.
- Arjun: **Hell hath no fury worse than a woman scorned.** Arjun had spurned the advances of a beautiful celestial dancer Urvashi and she cursed him that he would lose his manhood for a year. The brave Arjun had to lead the life of a eunuch for a year. Thus be careful to never insult a woman.

- Draupadi: **You cannot have everything in life.** Draupadi had done penance in her previous life and asked Lord Shiva for a perfect husband who was a brave warrior, morally pure, has the strongest body, and is the most learned and also the handsomest man on earth. She got whatever she wanted but in 5 different husbands. The moral of the story is that, one man cannot have all these qualities and you cannot always get whatever you want.
- Abhimanyu: **Half knowledge is dangerous.** Arjun's son Abhimanyu knew only how to enter the *chakravyuh*, not how to come out of it. However, he decided to enter this difficult war formation and met his death there. That is why, half knowledge is very dangerous. Whatever you know must be thorough.
- Kunti: **Look before you leap.** When Arjun won Draupadi at her *swayamvar* and brought her to meet Kunti, she was cooking. She carelessly said with even looking that all 5 brothers must share the prize they got. So never commit yourself saying something without analysing the implications your words can have.
- Dhritarashtra: **Blind love is dangerous.** The blind King of Hastinapur had but one fault; he loved his children too much and thus he never reprimanded them. This is a parenting lesson for every father/mother. Correct your children before they go astray because your blind love won't help them.

1.7 OTHER EPICS OF HINDU MYTHOLOGY

Hindu Mythology is packed with a lot of Epic narratives and many more works namely the *Bhagavatham*, *Vedas*, *Puranas*. The Tamil mythology is a mix of elements from Tamil culture, Dravidian ideologies and Indus Valley culture alongside the Hindu religious aspects.

- Skandha Puranam (Stories about Lord Murugan)
- Natarajar Sarithram (Brief Biography of Lord Shiva's abode at Chidambaram)
- Aiyyapan Puranam (Hymns on Lord Aiyappan)
- Kannagi kadhaigal (History of the Legendary Tamil woman of the Chilapathigaram age)
- Paripadal (Hymns of Perumal)
- Stories of the Sangam Literature

The above said are the other Epic stories alongside the Ramayana and Mahabaratha of the Hindu mythology.

1.8 NEED FOR THE STUDY

An epic may deal with such various subjects as myths, heroic legends, histories, edifying religious tales, animal stories, or philosophical or moral theories. Epic poetry has been and continues to be used by peoples all over the world to transmit their traditions from one generation to another, without the aid of writing. These traditions frequently consist of legendary narratives about the glorious deeds of their national heroes.

The study aims to analyse the narrative types of the Epic genre movies of Tamil Language and what are the different types of storytelling methods that are employed. The chosen films mostly deal with the sub-epics since the main Epics of Ramayana and Mahabaratha has been discussed a lot otherwise. There is little or no research in the case of Tamil sub-Epic story movies with special reference to its characters' portrayal and hence the study would fill in the bridge between.

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study includes Tamil movies of the 1960s era that comes only under Epic Genre and not its sub genres like the periodic films or the

historic ones. Also the chosen movies are the ones directed by A.P.Nagarajan, one of the very renowned yester year's directors who mostly would deal with only Epic genre narratives.

The movies that are chosen for analysis are

- **Thiruvilaiyadal (1965)**
- **Kandhan Karunai (1967)**
- **Thirumal Perumai (1968)**

1.10 TITLE OF THE STUDY

The Narrative strategies and communication of values in Tamil Epic tradition films of A.P. Nagarajan

1.11 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to analyse the narrative strategies and communication of values, that are being inculcated through the Tamil Epic films of A.P. Nagarajan.

1.12 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- How have the Epic stories taken different shapes in Tamil movie narratives of 1960s era?
- How have the characters been portrayed in the movies?
- What are the values that are being communicated to us through the Epic tradition Tamil movies of 1960s?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 DEFINING THE “EPIC” GENRE

The dictionary meaning of *Epic* says that it could be a long verse narrative on a serious subject, which is told in a very formal and also elevated style, centred on a hero or any quasi-divine whose actions depend upon the fate of the tribe. In literary usage, the term encompasses both oral and written compositions.

The prime examples of the oral epic are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Outstanding examples of the written epic include Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* in Latin, *Chanson de Roland* in medieval French, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* in Italian, *Cantar de mio Cid* in Spanish, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in English. (A.Yoshida, 2013)

Homer, the author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, is sometimes referred to as the "Father of Epic Poetry." Based on the conventions he established, classical epics began with an argument and an invocation to a guiding spirit then started the narrative *in medias res*. In modern use, the term, "epic," is generally applied to all lengthy works on matters of great importance. The Rhapsodoi, professional reciters, memorized his work and passed it on by word of mouth as part of an oral tradition. (P.Ludgendorf, 1996)

Epic films were also musical films by themselves. A musical film as a genre was a natural development of the stage musical after the advent of sound film technology. Typically in many epic films, the songs were used to advance the plot or describe an emotion. The setting of a musical film is Big, colourful, over the top. The scenery can

often change from a realistic picture to something more like a dream.

2.2 CLASSIFICATIONS OF AN EPIC

According to Shoma Munshi, the Indian Epic stories could be predominantly of three types namely the Martial epics, sacrificial epics and Romantic Epics. All these could be even combined but the thematic narratives are more in existence. The reason she attributes is that there needs to be always a binary polarity between the characterizations and hence the themes are infused into the epics.

There are number of ways in which literary scholars have tried to classify the varied types of poems that are generally considered to be "Epics."

1. C.S. Lewis (*A Preface to Paradise Lost*, 2005) distinguishes between primary and secondary epic poetry.

Primary epic- A Primary Epic can be defined as the poetry 'which stems from heroic deeds and which is composed, in the first instance, in order that such deeds may not be forgotten.' It is practical in purporting to record historical events and deals with the real world, "however much glamour may be added in the process."

Secondary epic- poetry which may deal with heroic legend or with more abstract themes than the type available to primary epic, and which is composed, not as a historical record of the past, but as a poet's artistic interpretation or re-creation of legend or theme. "Much is imagined and imaginary, so that a new world is created. The combination of the poet's 'seeing eye' and his personal style together create something which is not based on reality, but has a life of its own to be transmitted to the mind of the reader."

2. Michael Meyer (*The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 2007) describes the differences between the literary Epic poetry and Oral Epic Poetry.

Literary epic poetry-It is a poetry written and intended for a reading audience by a literate poet. (This kind of epic generally coincides with C.S. Lewis' "secondary epic poetry and includes such works as the *Aeneid* of Vergil, *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, *The Fairie Queen* of Spenser, *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso, and *Paradise Lost* of John Milton.

Oral epic Poetry- This is a heroic poetry that is composed for, and at the time of, oral performance.

Aristotle gives the difference between Serious Epic and Comedy Epic:

Serious Epic- This is where the fable and Action are grave and solemn. Its characters are at its highest. The sentiments and diction of a serious epic preserve the sublime.

Comedy Epic- The fable and action for a comedy epic are light and ridiculous. The characters are very much inferior. Its sentiments and diction preserve the ludicrous.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF EPIC

Guerber H.A (The book of epic, 1913) gives nine characteristics to an Epic poetry:

1. It opens in the midst of the story (in medias res).
2. The setting is vast and it covers many nations, the underworld and the universe.
3. It usually begins with an invocation to Muse.
4. It starts with a statement of the theme.
5. The use of epithets.
6. It includes long lists.
7. It features long and formal speeches.
8. It shows divine intervention on human affairs.

9. The Heroes embody the values of civilization.

Epic Conventions or characteristics could include:

1. The hero is a figure of great national or even cosmic importance, usually the ideal man of his culture. He often has superhuman or divine traits. He has an imposing physical stature and is greater in all ways than the common man.
2. The setting is vast in scope. It covers great geographical distances, perhaps even visiting the underworld, other worlds, and other times.
3. The action consists of deeds of valour or superhuman courage (especially in battle).
4. Supernatural forces interest themselves in the action and intervene at times. The intervention of the gods is called "machinery." (S.Greenblatt, 2012)

2.4 THE EPIC FILM

“An Epic Poem, the critics agree is the greatest work Human Nature is capable of”, says Alexander Pope. When Epic film made its first appearance to the World in the early twentieth century, it had already had at its disposal many recognizable epic traits that could be associated with its narratives. Early epics were influenced by the preference of the audience with reference to the spectacle of the event but it was denied due to the previous art forms like the theatre or an opera for that case. Later the films took over it and replaced it with the epic themes. For the first time in the history a popular medium was affordable with even more amount of spectacle, Action and length.

2.4.1 NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Narrative strategies are certain use of narrative techniques and practises to achieve a goal. It could be creative, referential and receptive to the audience. Each narrative is an utterance and thus can be described as an act of communication. In accordance to *Aristotle's* "Rhetoric triangle" someone tells someone about something. Thus the theory of narration belongs to the field of general theory of communication. (V. Tjupa, 2013)

The early Epic poems since were mainly the Oral verse, and also which was translated from Greek (where Epic Tradition) originated, the true words and verses were forgotten. Oral literature emerges in verse, simply because the devices associated with poetry -- rhyme, rhythmic stress, repetition -- facilitate memory.

The original function of oral literature is primarily to commemorate, and its original form is a performance, an enactment by a professional poet, a minstrel or bard. Thus oral poetry gives the recorded events great immediacy. Each repetition of oral poetry - - out loud, in front of an audience -- recreates its subject matter, involving the listeners as if the events described were happening anew.

The generic label "epic" comes from the Greek "epos," which means "word," referring to the feeling and ethical intent of the speaker rather than to form or subject matter. An epic poem tells a story of deep feeling and ethical significance. This intent may be felt in the stock epithets and traditional phrases mentioned above.

To speak of "Dawn with finger tips of rose," as Homer often does, instead of saying, "the sun came up," charges the natural world with personality, suggesting its involvement in human affairs. There was no festive gathering complete without his song. Accompanied by a stringed instrument, the epic song was both the most popular form of entertainment in the ancient world and the repository of a people's cultural

tradition and history. It is telling that the highest heroes are endowed with a talent for music. (B.College, 1990)

Structure of an Epic Poem

The structure of an epic poem is the organization of the plot. It is the order in which the episodes that make up the plot are presented to the audience

- The main type of structure for an epic poem is non-linear
- Flashbacks are used to facilitate a non-linear structure
- Flashbacks are interpolated descriptions or scenes representing events that happened before the point at which the plot open
- The narrator of the poem changes on occasions. Ex: Homer uses himself, other epic heroes, other bards and even Odysseus as the narrator on occasions

Aristotle's Poetics gives the syntax for how an Epic should be:

1. First, epic poetry must maintain the unity of plot. In this it is allied with tragedy against history. History tells us all that happened during a certain time period or to certain people, and as such it is often somewhat disconnected. Epic poetry should focus on one particular story that remains an organic whole. Homer is an excellent example of such an epic poet, as he tells a particular, connected story in the *Iliad* rather than trying to narrate everything that happened during the Trojan War.

By plot Aristotle means the arrangement of incidents. Incidents mean action, and tragedy is an imitation of actions, both internal and external. That is to say that it also imitates the mental processes of the dramatic personae. In answering a question once he said that a tragedy could be written without a character but not without a plot. Though his overstatement on plot, he accepts that without action there cannot be a tragedy. The plot contains a beginning, middle and an end, where the beginning is what is “not posterior to another thing,” while the

middle needs to have something happened before, and something to happen after it, but after the end “there is nothing else.”

2. Second, epic poetry must share many of the elements of tragedy. Like tragedy, it should be either simple or complex, and it should deal primarily either with a character or with suffering. Aside from spectacle and melody, the six parts that are present in epic poetry, they are: Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Song and Spectacle.
 - a. The Plot is the most important part of an Epic. The plot means ‘the arrangement of the incidents’. Normally the plot is divided into five acts, and each Act is further divided into several scenes. The dramatist’s main skill lies in dividing the plot into Acts and Scenes in such a way that they may produce the maximum scenic effect in a natural development.
 - b. Characters are men and women who act. The hero and the heroine are two important figures among the characters.
 - c. Thought means what the characters think or feel during their career in the development of the plot. The thought is expressed through their speeches and dialogues.
 - d. Diction is the medium of language or expression through which the characters reveal their thoughts and feelings. The diction should be ‘embellished with each kind of artistic element’.
 - e. The song is one of these embellishments. The decoration of the stage is the major part of the spectacle.
 - f. The Spectacle is theatrical effect presented on the stage. But spectacle also includes scenes of physical torture, loud lamentations, dances, colourful

garments of the main characters, and the beggarly or jocular appearance of the subordinate characters or of the fool on the stage.

3. The characters of the Epic film serve to advance the action of the story, not vice versa. The ends we pursue in life, our happiness and our misery, all take the form of action. Tragedy is written not merely to imitate man but to imitate man in action. That is, according to Aristotle, happiness consists in a certain kind of activity rather than in a certain quality of character. 'The way in which the action works itself out, the whole casual chain which leads to the final outcome.' (D.Daiches, 1979)

2.4.2 THE EPIC HERO

The ideal Epic hero, according to Aristotle, should be, in the first place, a man of eminence. The actions of an eminent man would be 'serious, complete and of a certain magnitude', as required by Aristotle. Further, the hero should not only be eminent but also basically a good man, though not absolutely virtuous. The sufferings fall and death of an absolutely virtuous man would generate feelings of disgust rather than those of 'terror and compassion' which an Epic play must produce.

The hero should neither be a villain nor a wicked person for his fall; otherwise his death would please and satisfy our moral sense without generation the feelings of pity, compassion and fear. Therefore, the ideal Epic hero should be basically a good man with a minor flaw or Epic trait in his character.

The entire Epic should issue from this minor flaw or error of judgment. The fall and sufferings and death of such a hero would certainly generate feelings of pity and fear. So, Aristotle says: "For our pity is excited by misfortunes undeservedly suffered, and

our terror by some resemblance between the sufferer and ourselves.” Finally, Aristotle says: “There remains for our choice a person neither eminently virtuous nor just, nor yet involved in misfortune by deliberate vice or villainy, but by some error or human frailty; and this person should also be someone of high-fame and flourishing prosperity.” Such a man would make an ideal epic hero.

Thus the traits of a hero given by *Homer and Aristotle* put together are:

1. Heroes are often of obscure or mysterious origin.
2. Heroes are neither fools nor invincible
3. The hero's way is not always direct or clear to him
4. The hero's way is beset with dangers, loneliness, and temptation
5. Many quest tales supply friends, servants, or disciples as company for the hero
6. The hero has a guide or guides.
7. The hero descends into darkness and is not the same after emerging from the darkness.
8. What the hero seeks is usually no more than a symbol of what he really finds.
9. With few exceptions, mythological heroes are male.
10. The hero is introduced in the midst of turmoil, at a point well into the story; prior action will be narrated in flashbacks.
11. The hero is not only a warrior and a leader, but also a polished speaker who can address councils of chieftains or elders with eloquence and confidence.
12. The hero, often a quasi-god, possesses distinctive weapons of great size and power, often heirlooms or presents from the gods.
13. The hero must undertake a long, perilous journey, often involving a descent into the Underworld which tests his endurance, courage, and cunning.
14. Although his fellows may be great warriors (like Achilles, or group of noble followers with whom he grew up), he undertakes a task that no one else dare attempt.

15. The hero possesses abundantly whatever virtues his race most prizes. He is a cultural example. His key quality is often emphasized by his stock epithet: "Resourceful Odysseus"
16. The hero gains honor, not by slaying a lesser mortal, but only by challenging heroes like himself or adversaries of superhuman power.
17. The two great epic adversaries, the hero and his antagonist, meet at the climax, which must be delayed as long as possible to sustain maximum interest.
18. The hero's epic adversary is often a "god-despiser," one who has more respect for his own mental and physical abilities than for the power of the gods.
19. The hero may encounter a numinous phenomenon (a place or person having a divine or supernatural force) such as a haunted wood or enchanting sorceress that he must use strength, cunning, and divine assistance to overcome.
20. On the whole the ideal Epic hero should be True to the Self, True to the type, True to life and probable and more beautiful than life.

He also said that a proper epic's hero who is noble and also possess a tragic flaw, which could be destroyed by a divine power, and thus the audience feels the *Katharsis* and moves to pity and awe. "The dramatic portrayals gave the audience an opportunity to purge itself of certain negative emotions, a process called Catharsis." (Aristotle) An extension was made to this definition "Media presentations of violence and graphic horror, argued that dramatic or violent cinematic exhibitions encouraged the purgation of pent-up emotion and aggression and in so doing reduced the probability that a person would act on these emotions." is given by Zillman and Mundorff.

2.4.3 PHYSICAL SETTING OF AN EPIC

The physical setting is created by:

- Imagery

- Descriptive words and phrases
- Similes
- Metaphors
- The action of the poem occurring in a particular physical setting can have impact on characterization

1. Imagery

Imagery is used to signify descriptive passages that create mental pictures for the audience. It can be used to describe a setting, a character or an action. Imagery is often created by figurative language, especially similes and metaphors.

2. Descriptive Words and Phrases

Descriptive words and phrases are often used to create imagery or enhance characterization through their impact and association in the mind of the audience.

3. Similes

In a simile a comparison between two essentially different items is expressly indicated by a term such as like or as.

4. Metaphors

In a metaphor, a word which in ordinary use signifies one kind of thing, quality or action is applied to another, without express indication of a relation between them.

5. Irony

Irony is a mode of speech in which the implied attitudes or evaluation are opposed to those literally expressed.

- Praise or approval that implies dispraise or disapproval is more frequent than the converse form.

- Often the audience is aware of the irony of a situation while the characters are not.

6. Epithets

Epithets or stock phrases are a device of oral traditions, designed to give the bard a staged pause to assist in composition and to assist with the poetic meter.

- Those associated with characterization help to develop that character by reinforcing particular aspects of their character.
- The adjectives also add color to their character.
- The epithets used in conjunction with common nouns are included more for the requirements of meter.

7. Symbolism

Symbolism is applied to a word or a phrase signifying an object which itself has significance, that is, the object referred to has meaning beyond itself.

- The olive tree is a symbol of rebirth throughout The Odyssey.
- Throughout The Odyssey the physical and social problems in Ithaca are symbolic of the absence of Odysseus from his homeland.

8. Suspense

Suspense is an anxious uncertainty about what is going to happen, especially to those characters with which the audience has established bonds of sympathy.

9. Climax

Climax is the highest point of the action.

10. Pathos

Pathos is attributed to a scene or passage designed to evoke tenderness, pity, sympathy or sorrow from the audience.

11. Contrast

Contrast allows the poet to highlight features of one setting or character with those of another. This is used to enhance both imagery and characterization.

12. Themes

Themes are the abstract concepts which are embodied in the plot and the structure of the epic poem. Themes should raise issues with a contemporary audience.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love• Loyalty• Gender• Sexual Desire• Honor• Heroism• Order• Family• Servitude• Patriarchy• Violence• Suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death• Endurance• Cunning• Power• Friendship• Hospitality• Adolescence• Temptation• Respect• Human nature• Returning veterans
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13. Multiple Readings

The way that different societies interpret the issues of the themes are referred to as multiple readings. Multiple readings often question ‘gaps and silences’ in texts. These are the nuances in the narrative strategies that are followed by the Epic films.

2.5 NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS GIVEN BY VLADIMIR PROPP

The author of “The Morphology of Folktales”, *Vladimir Propp*, who analysed over hundreds of Russian fairy tales, gives a different convention for the narrative strategy and also 31 Narrative Functions.

He broke down the tales into the smallest possible units, which he called narratemes, or narrative functions, necessary for the narrative to exist. Each narrateme is an event that drives the narrative forward, possibly taking it in a different direction. Not all of these functions appear in every story, but they always appear in this order.

These 31 functions are as follows:

1. A member of a family leaves home (the hero is introduced as a unique person within the tribe, whose needs may not be met by remaining)
2. An interdiction (a command NOT to do something e.g. ‘don’t go there’, ‘go to this place’), is addressed to the hero;
3. The hero ignores the interdiction
4. The villain appears and (either villain tries to find the children/jewels etc; or intended victim encounters the villain);
5. The villain gains information about the victim;
6. The villain attempts to deceive the victim to take possession of victim or victim's belongings (trickery; villain disguised, tries to win confidence of victim);
7. The victim is fooled by the villain, unwittingly helps the enemy;

8. Villain causes harm/injury to family/tribe member (by abduction, theft of magical agent, spoiling crops, plunders in other forms, causes a disappearance, expels someone, casts spell on someone, substitutes child etc, commits murder, imprisons/detains someone, threatens forced marriage, provides nightly torments); Alternatively, a member of family lacks something or desires something (magical potion etc);
9. Misfortune or lack is made known, (hero is dispatched, hears call for help etc/ alternative is that victimised hero is sent away, freed from imprisonment);
10. Seeker agrees to, or decides upon counter-action;
11. Hero leaves home;
12. Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc, preparing the way for his/her receiving magical agent or helper (donor);
13. Hero reacts to actions of future donor (withstands/fails the test, frees captive, reconciles disputants, performs service, uses adversary's powers against them);
14. Hero acquires use of a magical agent (it's directly transferred, located, purchased, prepared, spontaneously appears, is eaten/drank, or offered by other characters);
15. Hero is transferred, delivered or led to whereabouts of an object of the search;
16. Hero and villain join in direct combat;
17. Hero is branded (wounded/marked, receives ring or scarf);
18. Villain is defeated (killed in combat, defeated in contest, killed while asleep, banished);

19. Initial misfortune or lack is resolved (object of search distributed, spell broken, slain person revived, captive freed);
20. Hero returns;
21. Hero is pursued (pursuer tries to kill, eat, undermine the hero)
22. Hero is rescued from pursuit (obstacles delay pursuer, hero hides or is hidden, hero transforms unrecognisably, hero saved from attempt on his/her life);
23. Hero unrecognised, arrives home or in another country;
24. False hero presents unfounded claims;
25. Difficult task proposed to the hero (trial by ordeal, riddles, test of strength/endurance, other tasks);
26. Task is resolved;
27. Hero is recognised (by mark, brand, or thing given to him/her);
28. False hero or villain is exposed;
29. Hero is given a new appearance (is made whole, handsome, new garments etc);
30. Villain is punished;
31. Hero marries and ascends the throne (is rewarded/promoted).

This could be analysed with any plot that has a three act structure.

V. Propp also says that in every film, there are 8 classical characters found:

- a. The hero –The character which undergoes a long journey to seek something.
- b. The Villain- The character who blocks hero's way or quest by abducting a treasure from him etc.
- c. The Donor- The character who provides something that possesses magical properties to the hero.
- d. The Dispatcher- The character who sends the hero on the quest through a message or so.
- e. The False Hero- The character who tries to steal the limelight by false acclamations which are originally done by the hero.
- f. The Helper- The character who constantly helps the hero.
- g. The Princess- The character who acts as the rewards for the hero and the object of pleasure for a villain.
- h. The Princess' father- He is the one who tests the hero and rewards for his good deeds mostly with his daughter.

2.6 RELIGIOUS EPICS AND COMMUNICATION OF VALUES

Although it is widely accepted that India's first entirely Indian-made film was *Raja Harishchandra*, some sources such as Rajadhyaksha and Willeman (1999) give precedence to R.G. Torney and N.G. Chitre's *Pundalik*, a devotional film about a saint in Maharashtra. One of the early Times of India article (25th May 1912) had stated that "Pundalik has the power to arrest the attention Of Hindus"

There is a sort of unclear definition for generic Conventions for a devotional film, and like any other cinematic genres there is a hybrid nature between the two. As far as the history is concerned even before Epic films came, the founding genres of India were the devotional films. (R.Dwyer, 2007)

The devotional films or the Religious epic films are often set outside the Brahminical religion or question some aspects of it, and also celebrate the introduction of vernacular languages into worship. Nearly every “regional” language of India has a Strong “*Bhakti*” tradition. These movies also attempted to communicate religious norms and values to the audience. Since it was mostly Hinduism oriented movies, the values of Hindu religion were predominantly found among the movies.

Within most of the books of Hinduism, very little is written explicitly on religious values and attitudes. Since values are always subtle and exhibited through one’s behaviour, most of the Hindu texts explore them thematically, through topical issues. Hinduism teaches concepts that enhance the values for life, the values that are demonstrated through practises and the nurturing of suitable values, through practise of morality and spiritual discipline is necessary to assimilate one’s knowledge.

Although the religion of Hinduism is very accommodative, the values are not as fluid as people think. The values of the religion solely depend on execution of *Dharma* in terms of specified duties, both spiritual and socio-religious. (S.Knapp, 2005)

2.6.1 BHAKTHI MOVEMENT

What is today known as the Bhakti Movement had its genesis in the South of India in the 6th century C.E. It is characterized by the writings of its poet-saints, many of whom were female, that extolled passionate devotional love for the Divine. The Bhakti Movement gained momentum from the 12th centuries in the central western regions of India, and then moved northward coming to an end roughly in the 17th century. (V.Narayanan, 1994)

The poets and saints of medieval *Bhakti movement* appeared throughout India. Although all had their individual genius, the *Bhakti* lyricists shared a number of common features. Unlike Sanskrit authors, mainly well-educated members of the Brahman class whose learning and status shaped their outlook, *Bhakti* poets were not

restricted to a single language or class. They brought to their poetry a familiarity with folk religion unknown or ignored in the Sanskrit texts. The use of the spoken language, even though it was formalized, made possible the expression of an unmediated vision that needed no further context; thus, the lyrics are intensely personal and precise. These works illustrate the local and reformist tendency evidenced throughout India in the vernacular literatures, especially in Tamil, Bengali, and Hindi.

Thus the impact of the Bhakti on the formation of the religion we call “Hinduism” was very enormous and extended over the whole of the sub- continent. There were new themes of songs and very many religious differences, Hagiographies of the new gurus and other godmen etc. The movies that were made mostly had the following values:

1. Satyameva jayate’ (Truth alone triumphs)
2. Become a yogi
3. Elevate yourself by chanting "ohm"
4. Elevate yourself to see others in yourself and yourself in others.
5. There is no dharma (duty ordained from a higher level) superior to not harming or hurting others.
6. One’s personality is determined by his/ her guna and karma
7. Graduate out of Maya

2.7 TAMIL EPIC FILMS

In South India, professional drama companies from the north performing in Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, and Hindustani started visiting the larger cities of Madras Presidency on a regular basis in the 1870s. Inspired by these touring companies, new Tamil drama companies had begun to perform by the 1890s (Sambanda Muthaliyar 1932). The common repertoire for these Parsi-style Tamil

dramas consisted of love or miracle dramas adapted from well-known Persian stories (Kulebakavali, Allavudin, Indra Saba), Hindu epics (Ramayana, Mahabaratam, Valli Tirumanam), Tamil epics (Kovalan), Tamil folk stories (Sarangatharam, Pavalakkodi, Nalla Thangal), and stories about the lives of great Tamil devotees and saints (Nandanar, Sakkubai, Arunagirinathar). (S.Hughes, 2007)

Movies until early 1940s had nothing but epics of India as its themes, later which which had a drift towards the social movements and national movements. Notable movies of this era were *Andha Naal* (1954) which was inspired by Japanese classic Rashomon by Akira Kurosawa. Again movies of early 1960s saw the boom of epic genre movies which were made to interest the then audience who were exposed more of social issues oriented movies.

2.8 AUTEUR THEORY

The origins of the Auteur Theory lie in the critical output of the *Cahiers du Cinema*, an influential French film magazine co-founded by Andre Bazin. In particular, Francois Truffaut's seminal article "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema" established a wary and denunciatory distance from the French film establishment. Ex: Alfred Hitchcock. Born out of an influential group of 1950's French film critics and filmmakers, the Auteur Theory explores the notions of individual creative vision and control in cinema.

In short, the critical perspective dictates that the director is in a unique and irreplaceable position of personal artistic perspective, and that the film is, most importantly, a product of that perspective. The employment of the French word for "author" (auteur) associates the director with the individual output of other mediums (painting, literature, etc.), and rebels against the seeming "collectiveness" of the film studio. Francois Truffaut's sensational assertion that "there are no good and bad movies, only good and bad directors" importantly situates film as the characterized

output of a creative individual, and responds to the economic and productive tensions in filmmaking. (A. Bazin, 2005)

An auteur analysis is judged by how convincing and compelling the scholarly community finds it.

- There are no objective measures of the quality of such an analysis
- Open to criticism because there are no clear objective standards

(A. Sarris, 2004)

2.9 A.P.NAGARAJAN

“The recent release and success of “Karnan” has prompted a lot of interest in the revival of some of the old mythological and epic classics. The early years of both Silent and talkie Cinema was surfeit with Myths and Legends as the subject, slowly by the late 50s the “social” subject had almost fully taken over, the fact that the Dravidian parties and its Leaders contributed a lot to this cannot be denied. The one person who brought the “Epic” back to celluloid was A.P.Nagarajan.” (MohanRam, 2012)

Akkammappettai Paramasivan Nagarajan was born on the 24th of February 1928 and christened as Kuppuswamy. His family were very wealthy landowners, almost Zamindars with thousands of acres. Nagarajan went on to grow in the world of Tamil Drama and started his own drama company the “Pazhani Kadiravan Nadaga Sabha”. He wrote and acted in several plays, when one of his plays “Nalvar” was made into a Movie. Nagarajan wrote the screenplay for his own Story and acted as the Hero in this Film. His film career had begun in 1953 both as a hero and as a writer.

Almost all of his movies fall under the category of Epics, Mythology or the historical genre. His filmography includes movies like Thillana Mohanambal, Thiruvavutselvar, Karaikkal Ammaiyar, and Thiruvilaiyadal which were all box office hits of the late

1960s. It had so much powerful messages in it which made two of his movies to be re-released during the recent times. Thus he can be considered as an *Auteur* for his style of filmmaking because he had a certain tendency of storytelling and mostly it was of Epic tradition. He made it possible to create a sudden rush for the Epic movies during the 1960s and there was a revival of interest on those movies.

Movies like *Thiruvilayadal* were well received. Sivaji Ganesan's performance was also acclaimed and it contributed to his long string of successful films. The other actors were also praised. A reviewer said "The roles of Muthuraman, Nagesh and Balaiah, though short, are portrayed aptly with vigour and expertise." *Cinema Chaat* called the film an "absolute classic", stating that "it's one to watch again and again" and they rated with 5 stars. Director Ameer, in an interview with *The Hindu* said, "Director A. P. Nagarajan's 'Thiruvilaiyadal' is imaginative. It treats a mythological subject in an interesting way. It is one of the best films in the annals of Tamil cinema."

Thiruvilaiyadal is considered to be one of the most "elaborate films" of the 1960s, and it enjoyed great success at the box office. The film ran for 25 weeks in *Shanti*, a theatre owned by Sivaji Ganesan. It was declared a "silver jubilee" film.

2.10 SHIVAJI GANESAN

Sivaji Ganesan is regarded as the greatest actor ever in the history of Tamil cinema. Along with MG Ramachandran (MGR), he dominated Tamil Cinema to such an extent that the two automatically demanded Madras distribution rights in their contracts and they had the clout to bankrupt a producer by causing production delays and stalling a film's release if they so desired.

Born Viluppuram Chinnaiah Ganesan in Sirkali, Tamil Nadu on October 1, 1927, and his father moved to Viluppuram where he spent his early years. When he was seven, a

travelling drama troupe came to Viluppuram. Sivaji acted as one of the soldiers in the play. His father was appalled that he had acted in some cheap drama and that too in a white man's part. He was lambasted and punished and ran away from home. He joined a drama troupe touring Tiruchi - Yadharathnam Ponnuswamy and Company.

Sivaji followed Annadurai when he started the DMK in 1949. He made his film debut playing the lead role in *Parasakthi* (1952). The film is one of the most controversial films in the history of Tamil Cinema, replete with assonant monologues. However in the mid-1950s, a trip to Tirupathi saw him fall from grace as it went against the 'rationalistic message' of the DMK that he propagated in film after film. Also, simultaneously the glorification of MGR had begun. He was now the new propaganda avatar of the DMK. The warm reception a restored version of his 1964 mythological *Karnan* received when it was recently revived across Tamil Nadu demonstrated that cultural icon Sivaji Ganesan (1928-2001) lives in the collective memory of Tamils. Ganesan stormed into the world of cinema through a star-making role in *Parasakthi*, speaking alliterative, rhetoric dialogue written by Karunanidhi. In fact his voice and the way he delivered his lines were his forte. Within eight years Ganesan was at his peak. He reigned for nearly half a century.

Still now fan following and clubs throng his house during his birthday and offer sweets to each other in memory of him. There is also a fan club called "Nadigar Thilagam Rasigar Mandram" that operates effectively till date in T Nagar, close to his house. "I like his acting skills. Earlier, I used to cut out articles and photos from newspapers and magazines and send it to him," says S Girija, who confesses of being a fan for over 20 years now. The lady reads like an encyclopedia on the legendary actor, asks her about his movies and pop comes the answer: "He's done 288 films in which he plays the hero and 17 others in cameo roles."

As if that was not enough, she's knows it all about Sivaji Ganesan's special characteristics, be it acting, his modulation, dialogue or dance. And when it comes to loyalty, it's difficult to find a fan as faithful as Girija: "I don't watch anybody's movie or even serials on TV but Shivaji Ganesan's movies." (Times of India, Dated June 20, 2007, titled "Meet the die-hard fan of Sivaji Ganesan)

2.11 INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality can be defined as the interdependent ways in which texts stand in relation to one another (as well as to the culture at large) to produce meaning. A central idea of contemporary literary and cultural theory, intertextuality has its origins in 20th-century linguistics, particularly in the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). The term itself was coined by the Bulgarian-French philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. Kristeva declared that 'every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it'. She argued that rather than confining our attention to the structure of a text we should study its 'structuration' (how the structure came into being). This involved citing it 'within the totality of previous or synchronic texts' of which it was a 'transformation'. The movies of A.P.Nagarajan that fall under the category of Epic tradition mostly are the ones which are idea taken from literature such as Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam, Skandha Puranam, Nalairā Dhivya Prabhandham etc.

2.12 IMPLICATIONS OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. The generic elements in a movie destine its narrative elements. Most theories of film genre are borrowed from literary genre criticism.
2. The birthplace of epics is Greece and the themes of epic are the founding genres of Indian Cinema.
3. The Indian epic stories are predominantly three types namely the martial, sacrificial and romantic epics.
4. An Epic film or poetry usually opens in the midst of the story and also includes formal speeches with different literary devices like the metaphors, irony, epithets and alliteration in their delivery of dialogue.
5. Aristotle gives the six important elements of an epic namely the plot, character, thought, diction, song and spectacle.
6. The perfect Epic hero should be noble and also possess a tragic flaw, which could be destroyed by a divine power and thus the audience feel the catharsis through them.
7. In any movie, there are always eight classical characters namely the hero, villain, donor, dispatcher, false hero, helper, Princess, and the princess' father and the narrative revolves around these characters.
8. Though the founding genres of Indian Cinema were that of the epic tradition, the Bhakti movement saw a difference in the making of devotional films. E.g.: Earlier *Varnashrama Dharma* played a vital role in Tamil cinema whereas after the Bhakti movement, the screen space of Brahminical characters was little lessened.
9. The Tamil films of 1960s that were under the umbrella of epic tradition and devotional tends made an adequate impact in communicating the religious values and moral attitudes and were mostly Hinduism based.
10. A.P Nagarajan, who was considered to be the master of mythological and epic tradition films, made his movies in such a way that one of his films (*Thiruvilaiyadal*) was re-released during the recent times as well.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY CHOSEN FOR THE STUDY ARE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

3.1.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

As media theorist McKee (2003:1) puts it: Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology—a data-gathering process—for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live. This can also be used in mass media, like a portion of sitcoms or some parts of a movie etc.

3.1.2 SAMPLES CHOSEN FOR TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- **Thiruvilaiyadal (1965)**
- **Kandhan Karunai (1967)**
- **Thirumal Perumai (1968)**

3.1.3 CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MOVIES

The movies selected are based on the criteria of *Auteur* A.P. Nagarajan's movies that range from the year span of 1965-1970 which was considered the peak of Epic narrative tradition. This was the time period in

which people had a sudden rush towards the Epic genre Tamil movies. Also, the movies which are selected are based on Secondary epic stories which do not cover the main epics of *Ramayana and Mahabaratha* as they were often spoke or researched previously in the research trends.

3.1.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The movies chosen for the textual analysis are 3 which pertain to the years from 1965-1970 that fall under the category of Epic tradition and also which are directed by Auteur A.P. Nagarajan. The movies are chosen for analysing how the Epic stories have taken different shapes in this era and how is the characterization done within the movie. Also the religious and secular values that are being given within the movie are to be examined.

3.1.5 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The analysis examines important scenes in depth, to analyse how the epic stories are being said through the movie with varying visuals and what is the connotation behind particular scenes. Also the song sequences are analysed to know how the elements of cinema being carried out. The religious values and norms of that time period are also studied throughout the movie in profundity.

3.1.6 PARAMETERS OF EXAMINING WITHIN THE MOVIES

- Title of the movie
- Plot or the arrangements of various incidents
- Movie structure

- Presence of a narrator
- Characteristics of an epic
 - a)** Vast setting
 - b)** Story opens in the middle
 - c)** Presence of invocation
 - d)** Constant focus on the theme
 - e)** Usage of formal speeches
 - f)** Divine intervention to human affairs or the vice-versa
 - g)** Usage of tragedy or pathos
 - h)** Number of songs present in the movie
- Characterization
 - a)** The hero (mostly a superhero)
 - b)** The villain
 - c)** The donor
 - d)** The dispatcher
 - e)** The false hero
 - f)** The helper
 - g)** The Heroine
 - h)** The heroine's father
- Physical setting of the movie
 - a) Imagery
 - b) Descriptive words
 - c) Similes
 - d) Metaphors
 - e) Irony
 - f) Symbolism
- Communication of values and norms of that time period through the narrative strategies

3.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews are to be conducted to the audience who have watched the movies that are chosen for the analysis in the theatre during the 1960s era to know about how the visuals and imagery created an impact within them. The intention of the interview is to examine as to why there was a sudden rush towards the epic tradition and A.P Nagarajan's movies.

The respondents include Mr. Theodore Baskaran, a profound film historian and wildlife lover, Ms. Vedha Gopalan, a famous novelist and ardent Sivaji-A.P.Nagarajan fan, Ms. Bavani Baskar, Vice-Principal, P.S.B.B. Millennium School, Mr. Gopalan, Retd. Journalist, Kumudham and is also a keen film watcher, Ms. Vedha Srinivasan, a senior citizen and a passionate Epic tradition movie lover, Mr. Sudhangan, a political analyst and freelance journalist, Mr. Karthikeyan, an auto driver for the past 30 years in the Annai Illam auto stand, and Mr. Durai Mohanan who writes simplified Vaishnavites Epic Nalair Divya Prabhandham. The detailed profiles of the above said persons are attached to the appendix of the document.

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

The analysis covers only three movies that fell under the category of secondary epics movies of director A.P. Nagarajan during the year of 1965-1970. Movies which constituted the primary epic stories are not taken as they have been much spoke about already. Though there was difficulty in finding people who have seen the movies in a theatre during the 1960s era, the in-depth interview consists of 8 respondents who have spoken about their views and comments about the movies, the cast of the movies and their other related experiences. The interview also includes one electronic interview with

Mr.Theodre Baskaran as there is a constraint in travelling to Bangalore and others are personal interviews of the respondents.

As we are in the age of watching *Mahabaratha* in our very own television sets and getting exposed to *Aura 3D* sound effects in the newly re-released *Karnan*, the analysis aims to study the ancient style of visuals that were captivating to the “those-days audience “ .

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter the movies are being studied and analyzed. The data is being presented using the methodology

4.2 THIRUVILAIYADAL (1965)



4.2.1 CAST AND CREW

- Shivaji Ganesan
- Savithri Ganesh
- K.B.Sundarambal
- T.S.Balaiyya
- Nagesh

- **Music:** K.V. Mahadevan
- **Editing:** M.N. Rajan, T.R.Natarajan
- **Studio:** Sharatha studios
- **Producers:** S.V.Rajagopal, T.N Rajagopal
- **Screenplay, Dialogues, Direction:** A.P.Nagarajan

4.3 KANDHAN KARUNAI (1967)



4.3.1 CAST AND CREW

- Shivaji Ganesan
- Gemini Ganesh
- K.B.Sundarambal
- Sivakumar
- Savithri
- K.R. Vijaya
- J.Jayalalithaa
- **Music :** K.V.Mahadevan
- **Editing:** R.Devarajan

- **Studios :** Sharatha studios
- **Producer:** A.L.Srinivasan
- **Screenplay, dialogues, Direction:** A.P.Nagarajan

4.4 THIRUMAL PERUMAI (1968)



4.4.1 CAST AND CREW

- Shivaji Ganesan
- Padmini
- K.R.Vijaya
- Sowcar Janaki
- Sivakumar
- **Music:** K.V.Mahadevan
- **Editing:** M.N.Rajan, T.R. Natarajan
- **Studios:** Sharatha Studios
- **Producer:** Thiruvankateswara Movies
- **Screenplay, Dialogues, Direction:** A.P.Nagarajan

4.5 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE

THIRUVILAIYADAL

4.5.1 TITLE

The title of the movie is being justified by the narrator in the beginning of the movie as a voice over. It begins with salutations to the fans, and it quotes the literary epic of Lord Shiva, “Thiruvilaiyadal”. The narrator briefs that whatever Lord Shiva does, it is to test the patience of his disciples and the Almighty plays games which invokes more *Bhakti* in the minds of His worshippers. Hence the title symbolically means the games played by Lord Shiva.

4.5.2 STRUCTURE OF THE MOVIE

The film has several branches within it, scenes of flashbacks and has got a disrupted narrative strategy to explain the arrangements of incidents and opens up into a new story. Hence similar to any other Epic tradition films, this movie also has a non-linear narrative structure of storytelling.

4.5.3 PRESENCE OF A NARRATOR

The film begins with a narrator (The Director himself) explaining the audience the meaning of the title and the purpose of the movie in his own master’s voice and opens with an invocation. Again once the movie begins one of the characters of the movie turns out to be a narrator who explains the rest of the story. The narrator travels throughout the story, who is present as a character herself and as well as the story teller for the audience.

4.5.4 PLOT OR THE ARRANGEMENT OF INCIDENTS

The movie begins with the invocation of Lord Shiva and begins in *media res*. According to Hindu mythology, Narada had once given a ripe mango to Lord Shiva and requested him to consume it without slicing it. Parvati wanted to give the mango to her children, Ganesh and Karthik. But since the mango could be eaten by only one of them due to Narada's condition, a competition was arranged between Ganesha and Karthik. It was decided that whosoever wins the condition would get the mango. Ganesha won the contest by using his intelligence. This angered Karthik and he left his abode and settled on a mountain top. The rest of the story revolves around how Parvati pacifies Karthik by narrating to him the stories of Lord Shiva. There are four stories in all. At the end of the fourth story, Karthik is pacified and he comes back.

4.5.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EPIC

- **Opens in *Media res*:**

The Roman poet, Horace (65-8 BC), coined the phrase “in medias res” in his monumental work of literary theory, *Ars Poetica*. In it, among other things, he describes the ideal “epic” poet. He says that such a poet never begins a story “*ab ovo*” (from the egg), but he begins it “*in medias res*” (in the middle of things): “He always moves swiftly to the issue,” says Horace, “and rushes his listener into the middle of the action.”

The movie *Thiruvilaiyadal* begins in the middle of the story, where a usual day at *Shivalogam* is shown with the advent of the prayer. It does not start from anyone’s birth, and it is shown as if all the characters were already present and just the audience being new to them all.

- **Setting is Vast**

Setting can be critical to all films. It can help convey the theme of the film, create the atmosphere, and makes the story credible. There are totally five settings used in the whole of the movie. Throughout the movie it is an ancient set up and there are mixed environment of the rich and the poor, castles and small huts as well. The first setting of the movie is in and around the *Shivalogam* where the divine game is being played on Lord Muruga by Lord Shiva. The next episode of Nakkeerar-Dharumi duo which happens in the Pandiya kingdom has more of a palace and a neighbourhood set-up.

The third episode of Dhaksha and Shiva sequel is a combination of palaces and *Shivalogam* where the *Rudhra Thandavam* takes place. The fourth setting is the Kayarkanni-Chokkan combo at the fishermen land where at the very first time; there is some outdoor set-up in the whole of the movie. The final one is yet again the land of Madurai (Pandiya kingdom) where we get to see palaces and neighbourhood areas. The setting is so vast since there were too many branches within the story and since it contains four episodes.

- **Invocation of the Muse**

An invocation begins an epic poem and acts as a prologue to events in the tale. Storytellers acted as narrators and sought creative inspiration from muses to weave stories of the marvellous and monstrous. Like any other Epic story, the movie *Thiruvilaiyadal* also begins with invocation of Muse. Usually Muse is a goddess(s) who are connoisseurs in arts and Sciences according to Greek Mythology. Whereas in Tamil Tradition similar to someone like a Muse who is so erudite about the 64 Kala (Performing arts) could be none other than the Almighty, who here is Lord Shiva.

Hence the movie begins with invocation of the Muse, with different people singing hymns in praise of Him. The tradition is like calling the Gods, to bless the re-telling of the epic story. Ancient epics were recited to an audience, and they believed the god(s) would go into the poets to tell the story. It is common to identify the gods by their supernatural powers and other spectacular qualities. This step is to pay homage and respect to the god(s). The author or the filmmaker can use traditional deities or invent his' own.

- **Themes within the movie**

According to *A Handbook to Literature*, a theme is "the central or dominating idea in a literary work" (Holman 443). Sylvan Barnet defines theme as the "underlying idea of a work." Mostly all Epic tradition movies have its themes based on the Good vs. Evil, Man vs. Nature, Love conquers all, Triumph over Adversity, Revenge, and the Battle. Similarly in the movie *Thiruvilaiyadal* the themes that are used are

- Good vs. Evil whenever Lord Shiva outwits someone and tries to conquer the anguish of His worshippers.
- Man Vs. Nature when in the third episode he fights against the killer shark (who is apparently Lord Nandi according to the *Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam*)
- Love conquers all when Lord Parvati though at times doesn't listen to Lord Shiva; they both come along with each other since there is true love within them.

- Triumph over Adversity when the Pandiya King in the fourth episode tries to make a music Scholar sing in front of Hemanatha Bhagavathar to win over him and get back his kingdom.
- Though there is not much of Revenge in the whole of the movie, in the episode 2 where lord Shiva tries to test the *Bhakti* of Goddess Parvati, he tries to revenge her father since he did not give his Share during the Yagna.
- There are several battles happening throughout the movie; not the ones on Battleground but many mental battles have been fought to oneself within the movie. Like in the case of the duo with Lord Muruga and Lord Shiva for not giving him the wisdom fruit, The battle between Nakkeerar and Chokkan, The battle between Parvati and Lord Shiva, The battle between the killer shark and Lord Shiva and finally the musical battle with Hemanatha Bhagavathar and the wood-cutter Lord Shiva.

- **Usage of Epithets**

There are too many usages of Epithets, in songs as well in dialogues out of which few have been listed out in the below

- When Goddess Parvati calls out her husband everytime as “The absolute Lord, who can be found everywhere” and when Lord Shiva replies as “The daughter of mountains and the receiver of my true love”
- The song “pazham ni” sung by K.B.Sundarambal is fully made of epithets to call out for Lord Muruga and also the word “Pazham Ni” is a

portmanteau of the word “Pazhani” where he settles when he is away from his family.

- In the second episode where the king Shenbaga Pandiyan is invoked by his men, by calling him the king of South, The emperor of our hearts, The king who skilfully protects the threesome of Tamil literature, The chief of Justice, the Saviour of all people, and above all the King of kings.
- When Nakkeeran is being addressed as the head of the threesome of Tamil Literature. And when Lord Shiva is battling with Nakkeran he calls him “your tongue hurts everybody and maybe that is why you are being named as *Nakkeeran*”
- During the duo of Kayarkanni and the fisherman Chokkan, he attributes to himself that he was the first of all to give equal rights to both men And women and asks her to recollect who he was, as she had forgotten her identity as Goddess Parvati.
- In the episode of Hemanatha Bagavadar, when the Pandiya king, BaraGuna Pandiyan invokes him by calling him as the Emperor of Music and when the King enters into his castle, his men calls him as “King of Kings, the saviour of people and the chief of Justice.”
- During the scene when Banabattrar and his wife has realized that Lord Shiva came in the disguise of a wood-cutter to help them, they call him “The man of simplicity”

- The last scene where the family of Lord Shiva reunites and then Shiva calls *Ovvaiyyar* as “Mother of all”

- **Usage of Formal speeches**

Throughout the movie, there is usage of formal speeches shown within all the characterizations. Be it literate or illiterate, when one can compare today’s colloquial language, all of them seem to have maintained a very formal tone. The most effective, elaborate and important speeches of the whole movie are listed down as below:

- During the first episode of Lord Muruga and *Avvaiyar* sequel, the scenes where she tries to convince him to get back to his family, the tone maintained seems to be very formal, lengthy and also at times she narrates and sings the same to sound even better.
- The next episode at Madurai in the Shenbaga Pandiyan’s *Andapuram* where he has a mild chit chat with his wife, they speak about a Haiku and try to find different meanings within it and also have a romantic time with it. Though their relationship is very informal, the way they present their conversation seems very formal and lengthy.
- The scene where the character Dharumi has a conversation with Lord Shiva who has come in disguise of a poet in the temple, they have an extensive talk on the prize money announced by the king for the best couplets. At that time, Dharumi questions him so much to “test his knowledge” and ends up falling at his feet for his ignorance. The whole scene is famous for its question and answer session of Shivaji Ganesan and Nagesh.

- During the episode of Parvati as Dhakshan's daughter and Lord Shiva while having a battle of words, they test each other's powers, dance the *Rudhra Thandavam* and finally realize the true love between them. The words they use, and the tone they present are very much formal and lengthy.
- When Lord Shiva comes in disguise of a wood-cutter, he explains how and why his timber is so special and also sings in a very simple tune according to his status, and like he wishes to sell all his goods.
- During the last scene when the whole family reunites and when Ovvaiyaar is asked to sing in praise of their family, she gives a very formal speech and again sings hymns on all of them and thus the movie ends.

- **Divine intervention to human affairs**

According to the grammar of Epic, it could possibly be divine intervention to human affairs, but it has slightly been reshaped according to the Hindu epic tradition. It could be either human intervention into divine affairs or divine in the form of human, interfering into human affairs.

- The divine family of Lord Shiva's often intervenes with the poetess Ovvaiyaar to have different discussions, like the one during the offering of wisdom tooth, and also when they reunite during the last scene. Hence there is much intervention of human and gods.
- During the episode of Nakkeeran and Lord Shiva duo, he comes in disguise as a poet who tries to help Dharumi. Again, in here there is a sort of divine power in disguise of human, to relieve human from another

human. Hence there is certainly intervention of god and humans again in the epic tradition movie.

- In the next episode, where goddess Parvati, is born to Dakshan as a human, she goes to the world in disguise of a human. Hence there is a similar intervention just like the previous episode.
- The next episode of Kayarkanni and Sadai, Lord Shiva takes the role of a fisher folk who makes Kayarkanni aka goddess Parvati who forgot her identity due to a curse of her previous birth. They both, come in aid of the fishermen around there and try to save them from the killer shark and thus there is intervention again between human and divine powers.
- In the last episode where Lord Shiva come in the disguise of a wood-cutter, to help out another human, Banabattrar who is being sought as the last resort to have a sing-a-song battle against Hemanatha Bagavadar who is considered to be the emperor of Music. Hence there is invention of human and god here as well.

- **Usage of Tragedy**

Tragedy is a quality, as of an experience or a work of art that arouses feelings of pity, sympathy, tenderness, or sorrow. It is the feeling, as of sympathy or pity, so aroused. It can be otherwise called as Pathos, which is a part of three modes of persuasion of the rhetoric that is given by Aristotle.

- The scene where Lord Muruga is not given the wisdom fruit and instead given to the brainy Lord Ganesha, audience feel a sense of tragic

moment since the divine family, the family which is said to have so much bonding and love got split up.

- The scene where the character Dharumi pleads to get his prize money but Nakkeeran says a huge no to it, stating that there is a mistake in the meaning of the song and also the poem sounds like, the poet hasn't penned it, creates a sense of pity among the audience looking at Nagesh's characterization.
- Lord Shiva fumes in anger as to why her father did not invite him for the Yagna and severely punishes her for attending it even after warning her. There is huge creation of pathos in here for the couple as they are such a made for each other ones and also they are the first divine couple to have shared their bodies as one.
- The scene where Baraguna Pandiyan is being challenged by the Emperor of Music, Hemanatha Bagavadar, he severely suffers in search of a music scholar who could win over him and get back his kingdom, and hence there is a sense of pathos on the king, who is unable to retrieve the kingdom from a musician.
- Later, when Banabattrar is being sorted out as the last resort to win over the emperor of music, while he is not even a classical music scholar, the audience tend to feel a tragic moment with them, as to what will happen if he fails to win over him.

- **Songs of the movie**

The epic tradition movies were also musical genre ones. It had many songs that were used to either enhance the story plot or explain what

could not be achieved through dialogues. Hence the number of songs that were present within the movies of Epic tradition was comparatively higher than the other genre movies. There are totally 11 songs in the movie.

Song	Singer(s)
Pazham nee appa	K.B.Sundarambal
Oru naal Pothumaa	M.Balamuralikrishna
Isai Thamizh nee seitha	T.R.Mahalingam
Parthal Pasumaram	T.M.Soundarrajan
Pattum Naane	T.M.Soundarrajan
Podhigai Malai uchiyile	P.B.Srinivas, S.Janaki
Ondraanavan Uruvil	K.B.Sundarambal
Illaadhadhondrillai	T.R.Mahalingam
Vaasi Vaasi	K.B.Sundarambal
Om Namashivaaya	Seerkazhi Govindharajan, P.Susheela
Neela Selai Kattikonda samuthira	P.Susheela

The music is composed by K.V.Mahadevan who was a contemporary of M.S.Viswanathan and T.K. Ramamoorthy. He has made over 600 films as a music director. Most of the songs of the movie have a very clean classical Carnatic music touch. For that case, all the movies of this era had a classical touch since there was a hegemonic presence of the Brahmin clan in the Tamil cinema. At every moment, and at times even when the screenplay doesn't even need a song at that moment, we could be finding songs that are sung by characters within.

Also all the songs are being dubbed for only characters in the movie and there is no song that is not mimicked or sung as a background etc. In this particular movie, where we can find 4 different episodes of the divine game of Lord

Shiva, in each episode there is 2 songs and in the last episode of wood-cutter and Hemanatha Bagavadar duo alone, there are 3 songs. Hence the epic tradition movie at times also functions as a musical movie.

The sets of the songs are also visually enhanced by the grandeur and very appealing to the audience. The first song aka invocation of the Muse song “Ohm Namashivaaya” involves a set up at the Shivalogam, the abode of the Holy family of Lord Shiva. It also not just begins with the song; there are about 4 minutes of Screen presence to all of the percussion instruments, the Nandi playing *Mridangam*, the dancers dancing away to glory, Goddess Parvati enters invoking her husband and finally Lord Shiva appears. The song is fully set oriented but gives a very realistic feel to its viewers.

The next song “Gnaana Pazhathai” sung by K.B.Sundarambal who comes as the character as well is also set up at the set but it continues to outdoor set also. The next song “Podhigai Malai uchiyile” which is sung at the Pandiyan Empire is fully shot indoor. The sets and the décor match the Pandiyan emblem, the fish. Also the queen is shown like a fish who loves to stay in water. The sets are brightly lit and though there are too many people on screen, the frame looks spacious.

The next song is sung in the episode of Kayarkanni-Sadai duo which is shot outdoor at the sea since she belongs to the fisher folk. This is the first ever full length song shot outdoor of the whole movie. The whole of the song is brightly lit, since it depicts how happy the fishermen are with their daily catch of fishes. And then there is conflict because of the killer shark. The fifth song of the movie is “Oru Naal podhuma” which is set in 5 raagas namely *Maand*, *Thodi*, *Dharbar*, *Mohanam*, *Kaanada* is so pleasing to listen. Also the visuals have a lot of décor in it with the musicians play the *Mridangam*, *Veena* and *Katam*. There are many shots where the 360 Degree camera pan is tried to show the

beauty of the courtyard, and the grandeur of around hundred musicians playing together.

The next song is “IsaiThamizh Ne seitha” sung by T.R.Mahalingam, which is again shot indoor at a temple set. The temple is little dull lit because there is no such happy occasion at that time and also denoting the next few scenes has to have certain conflict situation. The next song sung by T.M.S “Partha pasumaram” though looks outdoor, is set to happen inside the studio premises. The visuals are brightly lit since it has got happy elements such as song and dance. The next song is also sung by T.M.S which acts like a direct competition to the previously sung Hemanatha Bagavadhar’s song where he is being shown as accompanied by around hundred musicians. But in this song”paattum Nanne Baavamum Naane”, Shivaji Ganesan is shown to play five roles of Vocalist, Flute, Mridangam, Veenai and Ganjeera.

The set is like a neighborhood *Thinna*i shot during a night time and hence the lighting is little dim but the contour of the characters alone are brightly lit. The last song of the movie, “Vaasi Vaasi” sung by K.B.Sundarambal is a brightly lit one as it marks an end to the story, but not an Absolute, The end though. And also since the family got back along, and hence a happy situation prevails and thus the bright light.

4.5.6 CHARACTERIZATION

- **THE HERO**

The hero role portrayed by Shivaji Ganesan, and throughout the movie, he dominates the screen presence and takes the story to many levels. He is at times God, a quasi-God, a simple human, a villain of himself, A human

with divine powers and so on. He is such a good man who acts as a cultural example for the whole of the clan, rather to all people. Everyone praises him. But he has a Fault that at times acts against him. He is terribly short tempered but since he is the Almighty, his temperament is being justified, whereas the flaw remains as a flaw. His introduction scene itself takes around ten minutes of invocation, songs in praise of him and then the *Dhyanam* of him, which says how important he is to that of the plot. In the first few scenes he creates conversations with the people who live in his own abode, and also to his wife in a very pleasing tone. Hence his character of loving all is getting displayed. When he tries to make the scene light with Naradar who is always famous for creating certain small revolts (*Kalagam*) between divine families, the comment Lord Shiva makes is “You found no other place today other than Shivalogam?” And this shows how pun intended his speeches usually are.

He later says that he has to test the two of his boys as to who has the worthiness to taste the wisdom fruit. Through this sequel, one can understand how impartial and fair he is between all. No matter if they are his sons, they are still being tested if they are worth the fruit. The scene where Goddess Parvati explains Lord Muruga as to why Lord Shiva tests the patience of his worshippers, she says “He gains nothing out of testing his worshippers. But it just proves to themselves about their *Bhakti*”. This proves how much the hero is being caring to all of his followers.

The episode where he disguises himself as a poet, writes a poem for the Dharumi character for him to get the prize money of 1000 gold coins, shows that he answers all the prayers and tries to fulfil every wish if he thinks their *Bhakti* is genuine. Also he mentions that “I don’t appear in front of the indiscreet” which means that he knows whom to gift with what. He later subtly says that he is the God, but Dharumi fails to catch the hidden message through it. During the scene when he fights with Nakkeeran for his poem but which claimed to be made a mistake with the meaning, his flaw brightly opens up. He

opens up his third eye, which is said to be shown only when in the peak of anger. He burns since Nakkeeran still did not accept that it is a laudable poem. But later he recreates him and calms down. This shows his flaw but also as a superpower possessed by him and used when he finds people who are not in line with him.

In the scene where he answers Goddess Parvati after their word war, he says that he is the first man to have acknowledged that women are to be equally treated as men and they need equal importance and attention too. This shows that he respects all the gender and there is no gender politics in the divine world. Also that he has given his half body to his wife Goddess Parvati, and thus making the first third gender God, *Ardhanareeshwar*. But meanwhile he again flaws by burning his own wife to ashes and then feels bad to have done it, later re-creates her. So his weakness is shown here as his out of control with his emotions.

Later when Goddess Parvati, starts to narrate the third episode to Lord Muruga, she says that she was not listening to what Lord Shiva had got to say some while ago, and thus was punished to be born in the world, by forgetting her identity thereby displaying his shot temper flaw, once again. In his next incarnation as a fisher folk, he has divine powers but takes up a human form to bring back his goddess. But still, he simply does not do that and instead saves the fishermen from the killer shark and then marries her according to her father's wishes. This shows he is being so selfless when it comes to love and helps people to get out of misery. During the killer shark killing scene, his character shown is brave and filled with vigour.

The next episode where he takes the role of a wood-cutter, he tries to be colloquial amidst the crowd, tries to catch their attention to buy timber from him and also speaks pun intended dialogues to the buyers if they are not willing to buy. He also conquers the emperor of music, by singing a song which

mesmerizes him and thus he saves another worshipper of him, Banabattrar. Hence this episode proves that Lord Shiva goes to any extent of saving the people who worships him with true dedication. Finally he also accepts Lord Muruga back into his family, and hence proves even if he is the God for all; he is never failing from a father's duties.

Shivaji Ganesan, the hero of the film has his own style of acting and has been very instrumental in enacting the given roles to him throughout the movie. Though he is criticized to be over-acting his roles at times, it does fit the groove when looked upon on screen. Till now he has been a lot of inspiration to budding actors and directors of his age considered that it was a boon to make him act in their movies. Since he was a person from a drama background, all of his costumes, make-up and dialogue delivery seems to be loud and bold which later was associated to be his persona. Hence there comes a question of who is being the *Auteur* of the movie. Is it the one who gave the directorial touch, **A.P.Nagarajan** or is it **Shivaji Ganesan**. Just like how in the first episode of Nakkeran(which is enacted by A.P.Nagarajan himself) and the Divine poet, the conflict continues in reality as well.

- **THE VILLAIN**

The "villain" archetype is a character who displays characteristics of pure evil. Typical villains are self-centred, power-hungry and interested only in achieving their personal goals, usually at the cost of others. An example of an archetypal villain would be a power-hungry politician who has his political enemies assassinated to ensure his victory in an upcoming election. Vladimir Propp, in his analysis of the Russian fairy tales, concluded that a fairy tale had only eight dramatis personae, of which one was the villain and his analysis has been widely applied to non-Russian tales. The actions that fell into a villain's sphere were:

- a story-initiating villainy, where the villain caused harm to the hero or his family
- a conflict between the hero and the villain, either a fight or other competition
- Pursuing the hero after he has succeeded in winning the fight or obtaining something from the villain.

In this particular movie there are no particular villainous portrayals of anyone but still the characters that hamper the speed of the story could be considered as one. Hence in the first episode it could be Lord Muruga, who acts indifferently when the wisdom fruit is being given to his brother whereas he was the actual one to revolve around the globe in the first place. He does not create any harm to the hero's family because they both are of the same clan, yet he goes against his parents since he was not in line with them for a while and that is why goddess Parvati narrates the whole story for him.

In the next episode where Nakkeeran could be the villain who opposes Lord Shiva, claims his poem to be wrong in the meaning which it conveyed. He has a conflict with the hero, Shivaji and loses his power to him. Later though he is equally knowledgeable and has a high flair for the Tamil Language, he is being granted his life back to him. In the next episode where Lord Shiva abducts the daughter of Dakshan and he himself creates a rift between each other. Dakshan later performs a Yagna for which he fails to invite Lord Shiva and thus the conflict gets created. Later goddess Parvati herself turns out to be a villain temporarily and the couple tests their powers on each other. Somehow the battle comes to peace by the intervention of all the divine couples of the heaven and thus the villainous Parvati gets back with her husband thus saving the world.

In the next scene, there awaits a bigger battle ranging to a human-nature conflict. Lord Shiva, who is in disguise of a fisher folk, is assigned to kill the shark which is seen to be monstrous and it has killed almost daily a large number of fishermen of their area. He then seeks to fight against all the odds like heavy wind and not much of weapon as well. Finally he wins over the shark and takes back goddess Parvati. Thus he reveals both of their identity to the world.

The last scene's villain is shown as Hemanatha Bagavadar, who is considered to be the emperor of Music. But he is shown to be with so much pride and agony about himself and is too self obsessed. He challenges that there could be nobody to win over his music. Also he adds up that when he starts a stanza, Banabattrar will run out of shame and stain the Pandiyan Empire's name. But when he realizes that the wood-cutter who claims to be Banabattrar's worst disciple sings so excellently, he can't stay anymore in Madurai. He realizes his mistake, surrenders all of talents to him and leaves.

- **THE DONOR**

The donor of the movie is the one who hands over a magical property to the hero and invokes his journey. In this movie, the donor is saint Naradhar, who gives the wisdom fruit to Lord Shiva, by fixing certain rules as to not cut it into halves, but one has to eat it fully to get its fullest powers. This is how the whole clash of the family begins since the fruit is being given to the first son Lord Ganesha.

- **THE HELPER**

The helper character is someone who helps the hero throughout his voyage and makes his journey little easy. The helper character here in the first few scenes is Ovvaiyaar who tries to stop Lord Shiva's son from turning against him by explaining how important to be as a family. But he doesn't seem to listen. Later Dharumi could be considered as the helper to the hero, as he is the one who brings to the hero's notice about Nakkeeran who claimed his poem to be wrong. During the final scenes Banabattrar acts as kind of a helper, as he is the one who identifies Hemanatha Bagavadar to be of no knowledge in front of Lord Shiva.

- **THE DISPATCHER**

The dispatcher is the character who reveals who is the source of evil and sends the hero for the quest in the first place. The dispatchers of the movie are the two Pandiyan Kings namely the Shenbaga Pandiyan and Baraguna Pandiyan. The former one tries to search someone who could write a poem to erase his doubts about the fragrance from women's hair and thus God himself comes to the rescue of Dharumi. While the latter is the one being challenged if someone could win over the emperor of music, Hemanatha Bagavadar and thus he finds the Almighty comes in rescue of Banabattrar.

- **THE FALSE HERO**

False hero is the character which is mistaken to be the hero, for his qualities which he takes or borrows from that of the hero and tries to steal the limelight. The false heroes of the movies are Dharumi and Banabattrar who are being mistaken for the Almighty's powers as theirs. The first one submits the poem which Lord Shiva penned down and whereas the second is assumed to be the Guru of Lord Shiva who comes in disguise of a wood-cutter.

- **THE PRINCESS**

The whole clash between all the characters is performed for retrieving the princess back from danger. She is like a damsel in distress, who always needs the hero for her assistance to cross over all the hurdles she faces in her life and thus blindly is in love with the hero. Obviously Savithri, the heroine of the film, takes up the roles of the princess. She loves the hero, with full dedication, sings songs in praise of him, but at the same time she has also tested her powers against him due to some odd trials. In the second episode where she is not allowed to go meet her father, as he did not invite

Lord Shiva for the Yagna he is performing, she feels the pinch of every married woman. She even mentions that” I am no exclusion than the other woman who lives in the earth by forgetting about their mother and father once they get married to a stranger.” They both fight against each other and finally get back along as one after finding their true love for each other.

In the next episode of Kayarkanni-Fisher folk duo also, the hero sets out to meet a killer shark to marry the princess of the fishermen area. She is shown to have blindly fallen in love with the stranger, who is almighty in disguise of a fisherman. She is also the one who is being approached when all the fishermen are facing problems with the killer shark.

There are also other princesses who come through the movie’s individual episodes. They are Shenbaga Pandiyan’s wife who catalyses the king to have the doubt about women’s hair and its fragrance. The other one is Banabattrar’s wife who helps him in the service of God and she is the one who calls him when the king calls out for music scholars and also says that everything would be fine.

- **THE PRINCESS’ FATHER**

The princess’ father is the one who gives certain tasks to the hero, and gets his daughter married to the hero at the end. There are two princess’ fathers’ characters in the movie. One is Dakshan, who performs the Yagna in front of the Lord, but fails to invite him. He is angry since the hero abducted his daughter and urged to get married to each other. While the other one is the chieftain of the fishermen area. He is the one who announces the prize money as his own daughter if someone could kill the killer shark. He also identifies the hero and gets them married to each other.

4.5.7

PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE EPIC

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IMAGERY

- The first scene opens up with Lord Shiva's worshippers praying him with a lot of percussion instruments. Usually percussion instruments are made out of the skin of an ox. Ox is also the vehicle of Lord Shiva. Hence it is used as imagery in here.
- Goddess Parvati is shown to be in green colour which she is in her Meenakshi amman attire, at Madurai. The whole episodes happen at the Pandiyan kingdom and hence the make-up is used to remind the audience about Madurai.
- While the scene where Dharumi laments since he was refused to give the prize money due to plagiarism he calls out for the "poet who was clad in silk" which means how poor he is and he looks up for the prize money so badly.
- During the last episode where Lord Shiva, takes the role of a wood-cutter, is because mostly Shiva is associated with the destroyer of evils and hence his abode remains to be the burning Ghats. During a person's last rituals he/she is being burnt with the help of timber to burn the bodies. Hence the imagery used here is the timber that the lord, carries on his head.
- Hemanatha Bagavadar is associated with his nine disciples which are associated to be the nine gems that are so priceless. But at the same

time, they need a proper amalgam that makes them shine more than what they are.

- **DESCRIPTIVE WORDS**

- The song “Pazham nee appa” is a portmanteau of the word Pazhani where Lord Muruga leaves the family and goes.
- There is also usage of *Thinaigal of Sangam Literature* in the movie. There are 5 Thinais or the Sangam landscape that are given by the Sangam literature. They are *Kurinji, Mullai, Marudham, Neidhal and Paalai*.

The song which Lord Shiva writes for Dharumi is the song of *Kurinji thinai*, which emotes a deep romance between couples.

“கொங்குதேர் வாழ்க்கை அஞ்சிறைத் தும்பி
காமம் செப்பாது கண்டது மொழிமோ
பயிலியது கெழீஇய நட்பின் மயிலியல்
செறியெயிற் றரிவை கூந்தலின்
நறியவும் உளவோ நியறியும் பூவே.”

Also during the first few scenes where Lord Muruga is shown to stand on a hillock, since he had left his family. The whole scene matches with the grammar of the *Kurinji thinai*.

Kurinji Thinais

Landscape	Hilly areas/Mountains
Poetic attribute	Romance aka Oodal
Animal	Bull or Nandi
God	Lord Murugan

The next episode with Shenbaga Pandiyan and his wife where they both talk about literature and is it natural for a woman's hair to be fragrant, they discuss about a song.

“கீழோர் மறப்பர் மேலோர் நினைப்பர்”

The song conveys the crux of a woman explaining her grief over separation which falls under the category of Mullai Thinai. There is little artificial waterfalls that is seen when the queen bathes, which is again matching according to the grammar of Mullai thinai.

Mullai Thinai

Landscape	Forest
Poetic attribute	Grievances during separation
Animal	Annam (shown behind the frame)
God	Thirumal

While though the God of Mullai thinai is not shown explicitly, the colour of the queen which she wear post her bath, is blue that can be associated with the God Thirumal.

The next thinai according to the Sangam literature is Marudham thinai, which talks about elopement, or the couple's clashes. The third episode is about the couple's word war and the Rudhra Thandavam, which is a resultant of extreme super powers of each other.

Marudham Thinai

Landscape	Agricultural areas
Poetic attribute	Couple quarrelling with each other
Animal	The hero himself is like an animal, immoral to his wife.
God	Enthan

The next scene can be compared to that of Neidhal thinai, which according to Sangam Literature is associated to the craving of the heroine towards the hero. Kayarkanni who is the daughter of the chieftain of fishermen of that area is the heroine who craves that someone special would come to her and marries her. Even the helper of the heroine, Manorama aka Ponni, also asks at times that whether is she expecting someone.

Neidhal thinai

Landscape	Seashore
Poetic attribute	Pining and craving for the comeback of hero
Animal	Shark
Occupation	Fisher folk

The last scene of Banabattrar could be associated with the last thinai of Sangam Literature, Paalai thinai. Paalai thinai is more of suffering. The set itself is so dull lit, and their house doesn't seem to be very wealthy also.

- **SIMILES**

- The scene where Shenbaga Pandiyan romances with his wife, tries to make her jealous that he has already married someone. He says “my first wife is a maiden chaste called Tamil” and hence compares Tamil to a beautiful young woman.
- Also the name of the queen is a simile by itself. The name “Poonkuzhali” means that she has a hair that smells like a flower. She was the reason behind the King's doubt about the natural fragrance of women's hair.
- The name of the fishermen chieftain's daughter “Kayarkanni” is also a simile by itself meaning the woman with a fish like eyes.

- The scene where Dharumi gets introduced to the divine poet, he asks “Why do you talk like a God” where he without knowing compares him to the almighty. Also when he says” your smile is so godly”, he refers to the Lord Shiva.
- During the interrogation session between Dharumi and the divine poet, all of his answers could be considered as similes like, the language of Tamil and its sweetness, Beauty and its aura, Drama and histrionics song to Naradhar, Veenai to Vaani, Beauty to lord Muruga, command over words to Agathiya Muni, for archery to Vijayan, for greed to Dharumi himself and finally knowledge Lord Shiva etc are getting compared with each other.
- The pond of Potramarai is shown as the place where the poet Nakkeeran was recreated and hence the medicinal properties of the pond, defines and compares that it is the water of life-giver.
- After he gets back his life, he compares Lord Shiva with the whole world, and the Holy water. That can also be compared to the water of the Potramarai Pond.
- **Metaphors**
 - During the scene where Kayarkanni calls out for her helper Ponni, Lord Shiva who is in disguise of a fisherman, says “Ponni, Cauvery, Ganga everyone are under my control” which relates a woman and the flowing river to comparison.

- In the scene where the wood-cutter Lord Shiva is being bargained for his timber, he replies “This one timber is enough to end your life” symbolizing that he is the Destroyer god of evils.
- When the song “Pattum naane baavamum nanne” is being sung by the Lord Shiva he utters a word that only if he moves, the whole world moves. The shot cuts to show seashore with still waves, trees stops shaking their twigs, birds stop flocking each other, metaphorically representing he is the world.
- When Hemanatha Bagavadar gets scared by the song of Banabattrar’s so-called disciple, the wood-cutter, he calls his student “*Churutti*” to pack off everything and leave which again associates the student’s name and the deed of packing the things.

- **Irony**

- The first irony of the movie is, we all assume to heaven or the Shivalogam to be one of the most blissful places, where there should be no fights. But Naradhar who tries to invoke a chaos within the divine family, and very easily a revolt takes place just for the matter of a fruit.
- In the next scene where the tom-tom or the *Thandora* guy, explains how “important” the king’s doubt is and how serious the issue is. But it was all about women’s hair and how fragrant it is. We all until then should have thought that being a king should have got some serious business.

- When Dhakshayini tries to intervene into the Yagna performed by Dakshan, she curses him for not have invited the almighty and for not giving him his share. She says” let your arrogance burn like this bonfire” whereas she herself actually had replied to Lord Shiva in an arrogant way the previous scene.
- The next irony of the movie is in the episode where goddess Parvati as Dhakshayini wants to visit her father performing the Yagna. But lord Shiva claims himself to be the first ever man to acknowledge a woman and give his own body but then burns his wife alive for no reason.
- In the last episode of the divine game, where Lord Shiva explains that he has two wives and that too without any shame about it, brings in a stain on the whole of divine families who are considered to be holy and sacred.

- **Symbolism**

- The scene where Naradhar brings in the fruit to Lord Shiva, it symbolizes the sweetness of life could be tasted only if we are worth it and also if we respect our parents.
- The scene where the Pandiyan queen bathes, she is being compared to a fish, since the Pandiyan emblem is the fish flag and also it could be compared for its not easily available to anyone.
- Also there are lot of references to a fish throughout the movie like, the ornaments of both the Pandiyan kings, the Veena used by the wood-cutter incarnation of Lord Shiva, the bindhi used by

Kayarkanni, the cover of dagger of fisherman incarnation of Lord Shiva etc.

- The scene where Lord Shiva opens his third eye to Nakkeeran symbolizes the end of evils and a comeback of a bright light. The third eye, according to Tamil literature represents the state of enlightenment.
- The Yanga's fire is symbolized as the end of all evil qualities like the arrogance, dishonesty and cunning.
- The scene where Hemanatha Bagavadhar is being welcomed by the Pandiyan king Baraguna Pandiyan, he greets with a peacock throne. This symbolizes many historic literary events. Mughal King was famous for his peacock throne. The Tamil Sangam literature's *Kadai-ezhu vallal* Pegan gifted a throne to a peacock which was drenched and hungry. Hence this Pandiyan King is being compared to these two kings who already were very famous for their good deeds.
- The scene where wood-cutter incarnation of Lord Shiva finally finds a *Thinnai* and laments that it has been possible only because of few philanthropists around the place which functions as arrest abode to the night time travellers. This marks up the end of selfless people who lived during those times.

4.5.8 COMMUNICATION OF VALUES

- **Accountability**

The epic of Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam explains that no matter which family you belong to, it might be divine or poor, the Karma which one has to face will never leave him or her. Let it be Lord Muruga who had to leave his own family, or Goddess Parvati who lost her identity twice and rejoined Lord Shiva, Or Lord Shiva himself who was proved wrong by a poet of the kingdom.

- **Benevolence**

One should give others and fulfil their basic needs without expecting any rewards. Like Lord Shiva who helped Dharumi by refusing to get any wealth from the prize money from the Pandiyan King or the wood-cutter incarnation who is so simple and attributes Banabattrar as his guru so that the rivalry will stop immediately.

- **Chivalry**

One must protect the weak, the suffering and the neglected by maintaining justice and righteousness. Lord Shiva helps the fishermen community by killing the monstrous shark which created huge mishap to them. Thus he brought back peace amidst them and was celebrated for his deed of doing so.

- **Discretion**

One must recognize and avoid words, actions and attitudes which could result in undesirable consequences. Like for example Lord

Muruga should have thought before deciding to leave his family or maybe Lord Shiva should have pondered over himself before burning alive, Goddess Parvati. Also Goddess Parvati before going and visiting her father Dakshan performing the Yagna should have really thought about her husband's short temperament.

- **Self-control**

The movie ends with the moral that one must have self-control over the words and actions he or she does and thus will suffer if it goes out of control. Lord Muruga at the end, apologizes to Lord Shiva for have not managed his anger properly and left his family. Thus the family reunites for a good cause.

4.6 KANDHAN KARUNAI (1967)

4.6.1 TITLE OF THE MOVIE

The movie title's dictionary meaning is Mercy of Lord Muruga. The narrator justifies the title by giving the reason as a voice-over before the beginning of the movie. The narrator first greets the fans of the movie, and then explains how inseparable Lord Muruga and the Tamil Language are. "People who call out for Lord Muruga will be blessed with health, wealth and prosperity. The epic of Lord Muruga has been modified into few episodes and is being given to the audience into a colour movie and thus named "Kandhan Karunai" says the narrator. And before the title credits, opens up the visual of a peacock's feather and the weapon of Lord Muruga, the Vel appears as they "Velum Mayilum Thunai" and embark the beginning of the movie.

4.6.2 **STRUCTURE OF THE MOVIE**

The movie contains six episodes which are dedicated to the six abodes of Lord Muruga and hence has got a disrupted way of narrative strategies. It has few flashback scenes and the story telling is thus non-linear way of narrative. This is again matching with the usual way of storytelling in the other Epic narrative tradition movies.

4.6.3 **PRESENCE OF THE NARRATOR**

The first narrator of the movie is the director himself, who explains the purpose of watching the movie before the title credits and thus opens up for the movie. During the first few scenes of the movie, we are able to see Ovvaiyaar who actually begins with narrating the story of Lord Muruga. Also that she is seen as one of the characters in the movie as well. But later at the end of the movie, we are able to see the poet, Nakkeeran who pens down the divine game of Lord Muruga and titles it the *Thirumurugatruppada*i and narrates the whole story of the 6 abodes through a song. Thus on the whole there are 3 narrators in the movie.

4.6.4 **PLOT OF THE MOVIE**

The film revolves around Lord Muruga, his birth, marriage and his acceptance of the post of the head of the army of heaven. In Hinduism, there are six abodes of lord Muruga, known as the "Arupadaiveedu". The story behind each of the abodes is portrayed chronologically in the film. It starts with Swamimalai, where Lord Muruga teaches the meaning of the word 'OM' to his father, Lord Shiva. He goes to Palani Hills after a fight over a sacred fruit, which is his second abode. Then he wins over the demon king Surapadman in Thiruchendur and that is his third abode. The King of

heaven, Lord Indra offers his Daughter's hand in appreciation of Lord Muruga's Victory and he marries her in Thirupparamkunram, his fourth abode. He later marries Valli in his fifth abode of Thiruthani, later after a short dispute between both his wives they amicably settle in Pazhamudircholai, his sixth abode. All the events are summarised by Nakkeeran, at thus the movie ends.

4.6.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EPIC

- **Opens in the Media res**

The movie starts with Ovvaiyaar narrating the epic of Lord Muruga. But there is no absolute beginning that is embarked in the movie. Though the movie shows the audience right from the birth of Lord Muruga, it is shown that the family of Lord Shiva already existed and the audience were new to it. Thus the movie begins in the middle of the story otherwise called as the *media res*.

- **The setting is vast**

The setting of the movie is nothing but the set up, the tone which is maintained throughout the movie, and the time period which the movie takes place. The setting of the movie *Kandhan Karunai* is extremely vast, as it covers the whole life history of Lord Muruga until he gets married to his two Devis. Also the set up covers Soorpadhman's kingdom, sets of castle, a huge of the mountain, Kraunchamalai, Shivalogam, Indralogam, the battlefield where lord Muruga and Soorapadhman fights, the Andhapura of Deivaanai and Lord Muruga, the sets of Kurinji malai where Lord Muruga meets Valli, and then back to Lord Muruga's empire in the Shivalogam.

Thus the setting includes all the six episodes and various places which cover the entirety of Lord Muruga's life until his two marriages. Hence the setting is vast indeed just like the other epic tradition films.

- **Invocation of the Muse**

According to the Greek literature, the invocation of the muse before, marking any epic poem is a customary tradition so as to call the Gods for all success and endeavour in all what we do. The same is being followed by the movie *Kandhan Karunai* also. In the first scenes, Lord Muruga is being sung by praising him as “Vetrivel, veeravel” which means that the spear which he uses will bring all achievements and success to his followers. And later on Ovvaiyaar continues to sing hymns in praise of him, his beauty and the sweetness of the Tamil language.

At the beginning of every episode also there are invocation songs that are sung in praise of Gods, mostly Lord Muruga. Firstly, the one which Indrani sings “VelliMalai Mannava” is sung in praise of Lord Shiva in the first episode. The next scene where the birth of Lord Muruga happens, again there is an invocation which is sung by the 6 divine girls aka *Karthigai Pengal* who are assigned to take great care of Lord Muruga. The next episode when Lord Muruga teaches Lord Shiva about the four Vedas, again there is an invocation song which is sung by goddess Parvati in praise of lord Muruga himself. The next episode where the Kurinjimalai scene starts with an invocation to Lord Muruga which is set like Valli singing about their landscape and lord Muruga being a personification of mercy.

- **The statement of the theme**

The themes of the epic tradition movies are mostly good vs. evil, human vs. nature, human vs. himself, love conquers all, triumph over adversity, revenge, battle etc.

- The theme of good vs. evil is portrayed when Soorapadhman is being killed and the justice is brought back by Lord Muruga, and when Ajamukhi is being punished by Indraani's security.
- When Lord Muruga still wants to let Soorapadhman go just for the sake that he is a staunch worshipper of Lord Shiva, it proves the statement of theme as "Love conquers all" to be true. Also when Deivaanai accepts the fact that Lord Muruga has married another girl, there is true love between the two.
- The battle is displayed when Lord Muruga revolts against Soorapadhman and his brothers Bhanugopan, Singhamukhan and his sister Ajamukhi. There is also revenge within the demon's clan where they want to seek vengeance against the battalion of Lord Muruga and Veerabagu.
- Also throughout the movie, the theme of righteousness is maintained. Even if Lord Brahma is superior to all, when he did not know the meaning of Vedas he purely accepted his defeat in front of Lord Muruga.

- **Usage of Epithets**

- The first scene where Ovvaiyaar calls Lord Muruga and sings in praise of him by saying “ The man of words, The God with 6 heads and 12 hands, The divinity who lives for his worshippers”
- The scene where Soorpadhman’s sister Ajamukhi calls out her brother as “ the warrior of all, The demon who has got boons from the hands of Lord Shiva, The most brave person”
- The scene where Lord Muruga is born and is taken care by the 6 divine girls, Goddess Parvati calls out for him by entitling him as “ The son of the Lord who has three eyes, The only God who knows all the Vedas by heart on the day of his birth, The child who is born to take the divine family’s name into a different level, The one who is born to erase of all the hurdles of His worshippers, The God who is born to sustain the truth, and also the one who is going to be the wise of the wisest.”
- When the poetess Ovvaiyaar is being tested by Lord Muruga who is in disguise of a shepherd, he asks her, a lot of questions. Ovvaiyaar replies “You are the question and you are the answer too. Hail, the sea of wisdom” entitling Lord Muruga as the epitome of knowledge.
- The introduction scene of Shivaji Ganesan aka Veerabagu where Goddess Parvati gifts Lord Muruga with a spear (Vel) which later becomes his weapon of destruction, Veerabagu praises Lord Shiva as, “You are the one who saves the devotees at the right time, You are the one who teaches a good lesson for people who behave arrogantly” and to Goddess Parvati he says “You are the one who designed yourself into a spear to smear the faces of the whole clan of the demons. “ and “You are one in a million.”

- When Veerabagu goes as a messenger of Lord Muruga, to the Veeramahendraapuram kingdom of Soorapadhman, the demon king asks “who is Lord Muruga and how much names does he have” for which Veerabagu replies “He has 1000 names; Kandhan, Kadamban, Karthikeyan, Guhan, Shanmugan, Arumugan and after killing you he will be called thee as “God who killed Suran”
- When Indran stays inside the underground jail of Soorapadhman, he gives an introduction to everyone about Lord Muruga. He demands what they would do in reward if he releases him. When they offer name, fame and throne he entitles him as “He is a person who doesn’t have any wish. He has advised his own father and got the name of *Thagappan Sami*.”
- During the last scene where Nakkeeran gets to see Lord Muruga, who was previously in disguise of a old man, he calls out as “shanmuga, Gnanapanditha, the God who has come to show mercy on me” etc.

- **Usage of formal speeches**

The tone maintained throughout the movie is very formal and the Tamil is more sounding like the Literature. There is no colloquial terms used except for the episode of Valli, as she belongs to a gypsy community. The notable speeches of the whole movie are as follows

- The speech given by the little Muruga to Lord Brahma when he failed to wish him back and also for not knowing the summary of the four Vedas, thus proving Lord Muruga to be the almighty of the movie.

- The dual speech of the poetess Ovvaiyaar and the shepherd who has come in disguise about the “Hot fruit or the cold fruit” is famous for its battle of words and war of knowledge.
- The speech where Soorapadhman, his wife Padhumakomale, his brother Singhamukhan and sister Ajamukhi are talking about to release the people of Indra Logam or not, contains a lot of figures of speech and is very descriptive and formal in its tone.
- When Veerabagu is sent as the messenger to Veeramahendraapuram to convey the message of Lord Muruga, he warns Soorapadhman about how powerful Lord Muruga and his spear are. Also he speaks the pride factor of him till date and explains that it is a mere waste of time for him to compete against Lord Muruga, as it is so obvious that he is going to win. The whole speech of Veerabagu and Soorapadhman duo lasts until 12 minutes of screen space thus explaining its importance.
- The speech where Lord Muruga and his first wife Deivaanai speaks about the Hindu religious customs that are performed during a wedding and its significance, explains the symbolic meaning of how much they have been following the traditional practises during those days. Also the speech is clearly formal in its tone though it is between a husband and wife.
- The last few scenes where Lord Muruga visits the divine poet Nakkeeran who pens down the *Thirumurugatruppada*, the epic poem of Lord Muruga, give a formal speech to each other about why he has chosen Lord Muruga as his hero of the Epic. Nakkeeran also explains the analogy between the Tamil language and Lord Muruga without knowing that the listener is himself in disguise. Thereby he also sings a song in praise of him as the continuation of his speech.

- **Divine intervention between human affairs**

- The first intervention between divine powers and the human is the scene where Lord Muruga comes in the form of a shepherd in disguise and tests the Tamil knowledge of the poetess Ovvaiyaar. She is not behaving in a humble way like she used to be, due to too much of knowledge and thus, Lord Muruga tries to outwit her by playing with few Tamil words and thus brings her back to normalcy.
- The next intervention happens when Lord Shiva sends a true warrior alongside Lord Muruga, to fight and win over the demon king Soorapadhman, who is Veerabagu (Shivaji Ganesan). His origin is not being explained but just said as a warrior who would fight along Lord Muruga until his death. He travels throughout the movie with Lord Muruga in all his ups and downs.
- The next intervention between divine affairs and human power is when Valli, the gypsy girl gets married to Lord Muruga of the divine family. Before marriage, it is said through a song that, Lord Muruga came in disguise of an old man to woo Valli and get married to her secretly (*Gandharva Kalyanam*)
- During the last scene when Nakkeeran, the poet is visited by Lord Muruga again in the disguise of an old man is again an example of divine affairs intervening in the human life.

- **Usage of Tragedy or Pathos**

Usage of tragedy invokes a sense of pity and mercy towards the characters present on the screen. This is one of the characteristics of an epic narrative strategy. The movie *Kandhan Karunai* has also implemented the usage of pathos, to invoke clemency on the characters.

- The first few scenes where Indrani is tried to be abducted by Soorpadhman's sister Ajamukhi, sentiments are evoked and the Audience tend to feel sad for the character of Indrani.
- In the scene where Lord Brahma fails to explain about the Vedas and Lord Muruga tries to hit him on his head and put him on jail, a sense of tragedy is created. Because Lord Brahma is supposedly the chief of all in the heaven who takes up the role of a Creator but is unable to answer a small kid's questioning session.
- When Soorpadhman's battalion slowly deteriorates by losing all of his kinship to the warriors of Lord Muruga and Veerabagu, there is a sense of Pathos even though he belongs to the clan of demons; he does have feelings towards his family.
- During the scene when Deivaanai discovers that Lord Muruga had not informed about the secret wedding between he and Valli, she feels terrible about it and also asks Veerabagu about it, but he fails to tell the truth. There is pathos in this scene and audience feel for the character for it.

- **Songs and its sets. Epics being a Musical**

The epic tradition movie *Kandhan Karunai* has a totality of 14 songs on the whole, which is almost split up into two songs per episode, thereby 6 episodes and the rest of the two are sung during the title and end credits respectively. The music director of this movie is again K.V.Mahadevan, who mostly very often works with A.P.Nagarajan in all of his movies. He is also known as “Thirai Isai Thilagam.” during his times. The 14 songs are as follows

Aarumugamaana Porul	Rajalakshmi
Aarumuga Saravana	P.Susheela
Arupadai Veedu Konda	Seerkazhi Govindharajan
Ariyadhu Kettin	K.B.Sundarambal
Konjum Kili	A.L.Ragavan
Kurinjiyile	P.Susheela
Manam Padaithen	P.Susheela
Muruga Muruga	K.B.Sundarambal
Murugane Senthil	T.M.Soundarrajan
Muthu Thamizh	A.L.Ragavan, Jamuna Rani
Solla Solla	P.Susheela
Thirupparang Kundrathil	Rajalakshmi, P.Susheela
Velli Malai	S.Varalakshmi
Vetrivel Veeravel	T.M.Soundarrajan

The song Arumugana Porul marks the birth of Lord Muruga, which is shot indoor, with the 6 divine girls and 6 incarnations of Lord Muruga. The song contains many trick shots which are said to be very tough during those years. Like for example, 6 Murugas had to be shown on a single frame. Also some

scenes like all of the incarnations join to glow up like a star Etc has been made possible by a technician called K.S.Prasad who always worked with A.P.Nagarajan.

The song Arupadai Veedukonda which is sung by Seerkazhi Govindharajan and has also enacted for the same character as Nakkerar in the movie. Also he is the one who summarizes all of the six episodes of Lord Muruga which takes place in six Different abodes namely the Swamimalai where he explains the Vedas' meaning to his father, Pazhani where he stood after getting separated from the Family, Thiruchendhur where he kills and wins over Soorapadman, Thiruparakundram where he gets married to Devyaani, Thiruthani where he meets and woos Valli and finally the two Devis And Lord Muruga gives their presence to the world in the abode Pazhamudhircholai.

The song which K.B.Sundarambal sings is the one she answers the questions of the divine family of Lord Shiva's where he asks which is the rarest of all, which is the saddest of all etc. This song is shot in outdoor as a mountainous set up and where all the four of the family members listen to the song and praise her essence of Tamil. The next song "Kurinjiyile" is being sung by one of the doyens of those times, P.Susheela and is sung by the character of Valli, played by J.Jayalalithaa. The song since happens at a gypsy empire of Vallimalai, contains of the props which the gypsies use like the coloured necklaces, feather-like headgears, skirts which have got beads, etc. The starting of the song acts like an invocation of the Muse, where they sing in front of a stone that is dressed up like Lord Muruga. Also the usage of musical instruments to this song alone is much customized, like the usage of gong, *udukkai*, a percussion instrument that can be seen in the hands of Lord Shiva during his Thandavam.

The next song, Manam Padaithen, is again sung by P.Susheela to the character of Deivaanai, and is played by K.R.Vijaya. This was set to sing during their

occasion of wedding right after the explanations given by Lord Muruga about all the customary traditions and practises that are being followed during that of a Hindu wedding. The sets are so grandeur and displays like as if it is heaven. The colours used in the set decors and walls also match to the costumes of the heroine. There are more floral decorations since it denotes a good beginning of their life. There is also a *Magara Yaazh* in the set, which is said to be one of the very old musical instruments that were used during the Kings rule to embark happiness in their kingdom.

Solla Solla, yet again is rendered by the well-known P.Susheela who has already sung two songs in the same movie. This is set to sing by Goddess Parvati once there is a game of philosophy played in between Lord Muruga and his father, Lord Shiva. The occasion is very happy and is shown that she has happy tears while singing in praise of the Lord. The setting is set in indoor, shown as Shivalogam, which is brightly lit and looks very real.

Velli Malai Mannava is sung by S.Varalakshmi, and to the character of Indrani which again acts like the invocation of Muse song. This requires no set, but a simple idol of Lord Shiva which is shown to be made in ice, like the Amaranth abode of ice Shiva. And the last song of the movie, Vetrivel Veeravel contains more than hundred dancers in a single frame who do a lot of activities like *Kaavadi*, *Paalkodam eduthal*, etc to show the *Bhakti* that they have for Lord Muruga. Also the dancers stand in a position that reminds the shape of the Vel or the spear which is the weapon of Lord Muruga.

4.6.6 CHARACTERIZATION

- **THE HERO**

The hero of the film is none other than Lord Muruga, as the whole film is about chronicles of the Life of Lord Muruga at different stages.

He is being given birth with a purpose of vanquishing the demon king Soorapadhman, as he had got the boon of “Only Lord Shiva’s powers could destroy him, and until then he remain immortal”. Right from his young age, Lord Muruga is shown to be very religious, a Tamil lover and sensible to everyone. The first episode which is about him teaching Lord Shiva about the Vedas denotes how knowledgeable he is. Also a Thiukkural’s couplet says “It is such a blissful feel if one’s own son outwits his father and being the wise of the wisest.” Thus it is being proved in this scene that he is more knowledgeable than anyone.

In the next scene when he battles with words with Lord Brahma and outsmarts him as well, his love for the language is getting displayed. Also when he says “There is no connection between age and maturity” we are able to know how matured and advanced the hero is at his very young age. The next episode with the poetess Ovvaiyaar deals with conquering her with the Tamil knowledge and erasing of her arrogance. He takes the role of an illiterate shepherd who doesn’t even know how to read and write but wins over the lady with few words alone.

By this meantime, Lord Muruga grows up and also gains strength and thus is ready to vanquish the monstrous Soorapadhman. Though he wants to kill him, he gives him a lot of chances to realize his mistake and release the *Devars of Indrapuri*. But the demon fails to. This proves he is being the epitome of mercy that even if he is a very dangerous villain, he did not kill him at once. Also when we did not have any weapon in his hand, he sent him back and asked him to fight with more vigour tomorrow. He did not conclude the fight by saying “All is fair in love and war”. He followed all the syntax of the battlefield and thus won over the battalion.

When the marriage ceremony of Lord Muruga takes place with Deivaanai, the daughter of Devendran and Indrani, he refuses to accept the dowry what the parents give to him and is being a gentleman. Also when he explains the

connotation of the religious ceremonies such as, woman falling at man's feet and man also falling back at her feet, the wearing of a *metti*, the tying of the holy thread, and the standing up ceremony on the *Ammikkal* it is evident that how much he is rooted towards the Hindu culture.

When he woos and marries Valli whom he later explains to be the re-incarnation of the twins Amudhavalli and Sundaravalli who did a long penance to attain Lord Muruga as their husband. Thus he marries Valli secretly and undergoes a *Gandharva Kalyanam*. Even when he is newly married, he immediately leaves both of them and goes to visit the Tamil poet Nakkeeran who pens down the epic of Lord Muruga, the *Thirumurugatruppada*i, and thus proving to be very selfless and always thinks about the development of the Tamil language.

Though the hero of the movie is Sivakumar, the second most dominating character of the movie is played by Shivaji Ganesan (Veerabagu). He has his own style of acting that lures audience to look up to him. He is always being an *Auteur* of himself by displaying "a certain Style of acting and carrying out of himself". This is why probably the director A.P.Nagarajan chose him to act. Also there is a great Star value in the movie, which is not even possible with today's movies. There is again a conflict between the actor and the Director of who is being the real auteur in here.

- **THE VILLAIN**

There is more than one villain in the movie that belongs to the same demon clan. Soorapadman and his brothers Bhanugopan, Singhamukhan and his sister Ajamukhi are all portraying the villainous roles against the hero Lord Muruga. He is shown as a very pious and staunch worshipper of Lord Shiva, who has got boons from him that anyone else other than his own powers, cannot beat him and until he will remain an immortal.

Though he is the villain, he has great love for his family particularly his sister Ajamukhi. When she comes and complains about Indraani's Security who had cut her hands, he does not even want to know if it is true or not. He immediately fumes in anger and wants to kill the person and keep Indrani behind the bars.

During the sequel of Veerabagu and him, he is in agony against him and Lord Muruga who have come to vanquish his total empire of Veeramahendraapuram and the Kravunchamalai hills. He estimates in a wrong way and thinks Lord Muruga cannot do anything against him. Even after a numerous warnings of his brother Singhamukhan that it might be Lord Shiva's powers that are awaiting their death; he fails to listen, as he is over confident about his powers and never thought that he would be such a failure in front of the Lord.

When his wife, Padhumakomale expresses grief in regard to the battle being fought, and she says that her instincts say it is not advisable to fight against Lord Shiva's son. She also adds up, "We have already seen daggers and arrows but never a spear (Vel) and so let us be cautious about it." But he again fails to get the clue and says "Women should not speak this much. It is your duty to obey your husband's order" and asks her to not imagine too much that who would win the battle. Because according to him it is so obvious that he is going to win the battle.

He has a blind love towards his family, which is his greatest flaw. Any warrior, or for that matter a hero like troy, also has a flaw which acts as his major pitfall. He acts like a puppet to his sister and brothers and even after Lord Muruga gave him the last opportunity to save his life, he fails to catch it and makes way for his own grave. Thus the good vs. evil binary opposite is being perfectly displayed through the hero and the villain characters of the movie.

- **THE DONOR**

The character of the donor is the one who donates a magical property to the hero, to make his journey successful and purposeful. In this epic tradition movie *Kandhan Karunai*, the donor character is none other than Goddess Parvati, who gives Lord Muruga the magical spear or the SakthiVel which is considered to be her symbol of powers. Parvati reincarnates herself into a spear, to smother all the villains of the demon clan and bring back enlightenment amongst the people of Indrapuri. She also says to Muruga that “Hereinafter when one Says Lord Muruga, they should be reminded by the Vel or the vice-versa. This shall be your weapon to success.”

There is also another quote about the Vel in the movie, which Padhumakomale the wife of Soorapadhman marks. She says” We have seen enough bows-arrows and daggers, but never a spear” which means that the power of Lord Muruga is a never expected one.

- **THE DISPATCHER**

The dispatcher character, according to Vladimir Propp, sends in the hero for the quest. According to the movie *Kandhan Karunai*, the person who sends in the hero to the journey is Lord Shiva, who is also the father of the hero. The hero is actually being incarnated for the very purpose of vanquishing Soorapadhman, and the whole of his Demon clan. He is also given a lot of powers like the six heads, twelve eyes, twelve hands, a spear etc to do the same. The time period of him to grow up and the time when Soorapadhman reaches his peak of arrogance also matches. And thus one fine day, after the hero grows up, the dispatcher aka Lord Shiva calls out for him. He marks up as “The right time has come to conquer the Demon’s empire and it is for you to decide when you must be beginning your journey.” to the hero.

He also gifts him with the battalion and another selfless Warrior, the Veerabagu who is considered to be the powers of Lord Shiva in disguise. Thus, Lord Shiva Acts as a Dispatcher and a Donor at times to the hero.

- **THE HELPER**

The helper is the person who comes in aid of the hero all the time he needs it. Thus the helper of the movie is Shivaji Ganesan, who comes in the character of Veerabagu. He is someone who is inseparable from the hero and performs just what Lord Muruga instructs him. He is seen to be as Lord Shiva's incarnation as he is wearing the Tiger's skin on half of his body. He goes as the messenger to Lord Muruga, to warn about his powers to Soorapadhman. But the helper is shown as little impatient compared to the hero and he wants to fight back immediately and seek revenge. He is the one who is instrumental in getting the daughter of Indra, Deivaanai and the hero married.

Even when Lord Muruga performs a secret marriage with Valli, the helper comes to know about it. Lord Muruga says "You are half as me, I cannot forget you at any cost; there is no secrets between you and me any day" which embarks the Relationship between the hero and the helper. The second helper of the movie is Manorama who comes as the helper of the Heroine is Valli's episode. She explains her relationship through the statement where she says "To assist Valli, I, Solli is here."

- **THE PRINCESS**

There are two princesses in the movie. The first one is K.R.Vijaya who comes as Deivaanai, the daughter of Indrani and Devendran. She is gifted to Lord Muruga in return for have vanquished Soorpadhman's empire and releasing the people of Indralogam. She is so submissive to her husband, whom she considers as the chief of all Gods and she says that she is

so lucky to have him as her husband. She comes for a very short period and screen space, but shares a very long story with the hero.

The second princess of the movie is J.Jayalalithaa who appears as Valli in the movie. She is said to have a secret Marriage with Lord Muruga. She is from a gypsy family. She already is in awe with him and marks up a statement to her father when he asks about her marriage. She says “You need not worry about my wedding. Leave it to my God, Lord Muruga. He is solely responsible.”

There is little clash between the two princesses as to who should be the more dominating wife among the two. But later, they understand that they were twins Amudhavalli and Sundaravalli in their previous births that did a long penance to attain Lord Muruga.

- **THE PRINCESS’ FATHER**

There are again two princesses’ fathers in the movie. The one is Indran, who offers the hero to marry his daughter. He is put behind the bars by the villain and later rescued by the hero, Lord Muruga. In order to reward him, he gifts his own daughter to him. He loves his daughter and also feels proud that she is going to be a part of the divine family. He explains that she is filled with qualities like Shyness, Simplicity, Modesty, Timidity, Chaste are the inborn qualities of her. And thus he gets them married happily ever after.

The second princess’ father is Nambiyarasan, the father of Valli and the king of Kurinjimalai. He is so concerned about his daughter’s wedding and he believes that his daughter can make anything possible. He thinks his daughter is over-qualified for a gypsy princess and he wants her to get married to someone who is more knowledgeable than her.

4.6.7 PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE EPIC

- **Imagery**

- The title card opens up with a peacock's feather and a spear (Vel) which matches with the symbols of Lord Muruga and marks a beginning of his epic poetry. Also the first song's visual where the people are all in praise of Lord Muruga; they stand in such a position that mentally maps to the shape of a spear or the *Vel*.
- When Ajamukhi, the sister of Soorapadhman speaks about her brother and his world renowned powers, there is a shot of an elephant's tusk at her back. This denotes that Ajamukhi is as powerful as an elephant. Also her name means the same. *Aja*- Elephant; *Mukhi*- face in Sanskrit.
- The scene where Ajamukhi asks her brothers to find the man who cut her hands and kill him, all of her brothers stand in a line and the décor shows there is an array of statues of lion's right behind them. This acts like imagery as if that they are being compared to the lions.
- The scene when Veerabagu is being created to help the hero throughout in his journey he is seen to be wearing a tiger's skin in half his body, just like Lord Shiva's attires. This imagery recalls us to associate him with Lord Shiva and he is half as what Shiva is.
- The battalion of Veerabagu contains 9 people, who are also called as *Navakumarargal* which signifies the nine gems and the imagery recalls us that they will glow like the gems.
- The empire of Tharaakasuran, a brother of Soorapadhman is first demolished to conquer his kingdom easily. The name of empire is "Kravunchamalai" which means Crane (Krownch) Malai (Mountain).

The mountain is said to be imaginative one, and it says the mountain is in crane shape and it's that tall.

- The song “Manam Padiathen unnai” which is sung during the scene where the newly married Lord Muruga and Deivaanai are shown is set to a raga called “*Abheri*” which evokes sensuality and eroticism while listening without our conscience. Hence the Raga is being chosen to be played during their first night scene.
- The scene of a Yaazh, an old string instrument comes, to denote the time-period of the movie. The imagery does recall the date back then.
- During the scene when the gypsy princess, Valli is being introduced, the frame shows stuffed animals, tiger skin, and hide etc to denote the profession of gypsies. Hence the imagery explains even before the voice over starts.

- **Descriptive words**

- The scene where Ajamukhi brainwashes her brothers to stay with her and Find who chopped her hand she uses many descriptive words, to explain her grievances. For instance she says,

“மாற்றான் கையை மட்டும் வெட்டவில்லை
அரக்கரின் மானத்தை, வீரத்தை, மரபை வெட்டியிருக்கிறான்
இதற்கு மறுப்பு தேவையில்லை”

And she uses the syllable of “ma” very often in the phrases.

- During the scene where Lord Muruga and the poetess have a word war, they use a set of descriptive words, to win over each other.

Lord Muruga: “கொஞ்சம் நாவல் பழம் போடறேன், சாப்டரியா பாட்டி?”

Ovvaiyaar: “பழுத்த இந்த பழத்திற்கு, பழம் தேவையா பா?”

Lord Muruga: “சரி, சுட்ட பழம் வேணுமா? சுடாத பழம் வேணுமா

Likewise they use the word “Pazham” which means a fruit and also a person who is very aged and describe the whole situation.

- The scene where Padhumakomale, wife of Soorapadhman explains why he should not listen to his sister and release the people of Indralogam soon, she uses alliteration and descriptive words to explain the situation to her husband. She says,

Soorapadhman: “முவரும் சேர்ந்து என்ன வாட்டுகிறீர்கள்”

Padhumakomale: “இல்லை! மூன்று உலகமும் போற்றும் படி
நடக்க உதவி செய்கின்றோமே தவிர முச்சந்தியில்
நிறுத்தமாட்டோம்.”

- The scene where Soorapadhman asks who is Lord Muruga to Veerabagu, who is present at his empire as a messenger, he replies back in a very descriptive speech, in his own oratorical style.

“வேலன், வேதத்திற்கு சீலன்

பார்கவோ பாலன்

உனக்கோ காலன்”

For which Soorapadhman replies that he speaks more of alliteration and description among which, what is true is unknown.

- Veerabagu also adds up that

“உனக்காகவே தாண்டிவந்தேன் கடலை

வாங்குவேன் உன் உடலை

அணிவேன் மாலையை உன் குடலை

அனுப்புவேன் சுடலை

அனால் கந்தன் கட்டளை இடலை

அதனால் உன்னை தொடலை”

which is again counting to the descriptive words’ usage and also alliteration.

- The scene where Valli and Lord Muruga meet up, according to the Sangam literature the landscape shown refers to the Kurinji nilam. The names they have used, the places they have shown and the props that are displayed are all reminding of the Kurinji Landscape of the Ancient Sangam time period.

Poetic attribute of the landscape	Romance develops between the couples
Flower	Kurinji
Landscape	Mountains
Season	Cool/Moist
Animals	Monkey, Deer, Birds
Crop/plant	Bamboo,Jackfruit
Occupation	Gathering Honey, Hill tribes, Fortune Telling
God	Ceyyon or Murugan

This is the scene where romance develops between Valli, the gypsy princess and Lord Muruga and they both secretly get married to each other. The song which Valli sings starts like “Kurinjiyile Poomalarndhu” denoting the Kurinji flower of the landscape. They also live in the mountainous region of Vallimalai. The scenes that are shown are always dark and moist throughout the episode. The scene where Valli’s father Nambiarasan asks her to guard their crops from birds proves again that they belong to the Kurinji landscape. Also J.Jayalalithaa comes as a fortune teller (*Kuravanji*) which comes under the Kurinji Nilam’s syntax. And finally they all believe in Lord Muruga whose idol is also kept and worshipped at their hills.

- **Similes**

- The scene where Lord Muruga is being created the frame shows a star which has six faces in it and thus comparing him to stars and he has born to shine. Also to match with a quote that says, “There is always a shooting star the day when a legend is born” the simile of the hero to a star is portrayed.
- In the song where “Kurinjiyile”, the gypsy princess is compared to the Kurinji flower, which is very rare and blooms only once in 12 years and the heroine is as rare and tender as the flower.
- The scene where Nagesh comes and shoos the crows by standing above the crops, he is being compared to a scare-crow by the way he stands.
- The scene where Singhamukhan, brother of Soorapadhman vows in front of him, the backdrop shows a lion’s face that compares him to that of a raging lion.

- When Ajamukhi wants his brother to revenge the people of Indralogam, Soorapadhman says “என் மனோரதமும் உன் வழியே செல்கிறது” which compares the human mind to that of a chariot to explain how fast it travels.
- When Ajamukhi’s helper says “The people of Indralogam knows Maya or the way how to become invisible” for which she replies back that “They merely know Maya but we, demon clan are sons and daughters of Mayee”

- **Irony**

- There is an irony that exists when Lord Brahma himself doesn’t know about the *Pranavam* and gets hit by a little kid, Lord Muruga.
- When Padhumakomale, Soorapadhman’s wife explains that the people of Indralogam need to be released, she is being an Anomie of a demon Clan by following justice and thus displays irony.
- When Singhamukhan, brother of Soorapadhman suggests that it is better they stop fighting against Lord Muruga’s battalion, he displays an irony by being just to the people unlike his brother.
- Lord Muruga is shown to have an affair with a gypsy girl and is also shown to have a secret marriage between the two. The Divine family is itself having certain confusions here which sound very ironical.
- When Valli speaks about the people who live in the Land and the people of mountains (gypsies) she says the former are very cunning minded and restless. They are the ones who use guns and grenades.

But the gypsies are so peaceful, nature loving and simple at heart thus displaying the ironical relationship between the two.

4.6.8 COMMUNICATION OF VALUES

- **A good spiritual warrior will never Fail to rise up**

During the right time, when Lord Shiva called for him to vanquish the anger of the demon Soorapadhman, he immediately accepts his proposal since he knows he has been created for that very purpose.

- **Forgiveness is the virtue**

Lord Muruga, even after knowing how villainous the demon Soorapadhman, he still gives him a lot of chances for him to realize his mistake and come back to him. This is the character of a true spiritual warrior.

- **Honouring the fellow beings**

Lord Muruga who has never failed to honour the fellow members displays the good character of a hero. He also respects women and for that matter, he also fell at his wife's feet on the day of his marriage to denote that it is her Duty to save the divine family's name and fill it with pride.

- **Tolerance**

Soorapadhman and his brothers, who gave so much torture to Lord Muruga, were tolerated so much by him. Even when Veerabagu and his set of Navakumarargal asked about the battle, he said "Let us follow the syntax of a war, first announce him about it and then proceed."

- **Wisdom**

Lord Muruga is always shown as wisdom-dawned person throughout his life. The scenes where he outwits Lord Brahma by asking the meaning for *Pranavam*, when he over-smartly answers to Lord Shiva and is being a teacher to him as well, When he takes a witty conversation with the very old poetess Ovvaiyaar and also when he goes in disguise to visit the poet Nakkeeran who writes the *Thirumurugatruppada*i for him, the wisdom he has within him is clearly visible to the audience.

4.7 THIRUMAL PERUMAI (1968)

4.7.1 TITLE OF THE MOVIE

The title of the movie can be roughly translated as “The lord’s glory” particularly Lord Vishnu. The movie starts with the narrator justifying the title of the movie. Since the movie talks about Lord Vishnu’s magnificence, splendour, and beauty, this movie has been titled as “The lord’s glory” aka *Thirumal Perumai*.

4.7.2 STRUCTURE OF THE MOVIE

The movie consists of three episodes namely the Andal’s, the thief’s and the dancer’s which also in between has the narrator in between explaining

about the episode. And also there is few flashback scenes etc and thus make the narrative a non-linear one. The structure of the movie is disrupted narrative form.

4.7.3 PRESENCE OF THE NARRATOR

The narrator of the movie also comes within the characters of the movie to explain and introduce about each episode and its purpose of being narrated. Nagesh, who comes as a person who does *Katha kalakshepam* or the religious discourse person, firstly introduces the story of Lord Vishnu and his glory and is also present in between the episodes to explain the crux of the episode and to introduce the characters of that particular episode.

By way of his songs, Nagesh depicts three different stories in which he explains the extent to which Lord Vishnu test his devotees and his intensions behind those test. Nagesh also clarify the end results along with the moral that we should learn from them. He comes like as if he's addressing a crowd inside a Temple in which he says “I request you fans to lend me your eyes throughout the episodes” which might symbolize both the audience inside the temple and as well as the audience present in the theatre. He also acts as the humour factor of the movie.

4.7.4 PLOT OF THE MOVIE

Thirumal Perumai opens with Nagesh who addresses the crowd of audience with his mesmerizing songs on lord Vishnu. Thirumal Perumai tells three spell-bounding stories about how far you can get with Lord Vishnu's grace, and how he can solve problems. The first story is of a staunch

devotee named Kothai and her wish to merge with Lord Vishnu. The second story is of a king and his apathy to become a thief. The third story is that of a dancer who with her beauty vows to transform a sage in to her slave. And at the ends, Thirumal helps out for people who have true faith in him and shows us his Vishwaroopam.

4.7.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EPIC

- **Opens in the Media Res.**

The movie is shown as it is beginning from the middle where there had existed a great poet named Periyazhwar who always sung hymns in praise of Lord Vishnu. The movie looks like the characters were already well established and it is just that we audience seemed new into it. The narrator explains it to us, and there is no absolute beginning in the movie. Thus the movie opens up in the media res aka in the middle of a story.

- **The setting is vast**

The movie displays three episodes that take place in different time periods and the set up of the places are also entirely different. The first set of Periyazhwar who is eldest among all is shown first at a set of up *Agraharam* or a Brahmin colony of houses and the Temple set of Srirangam.

The colony they lived is shown as to be in Srivilliputhur, near Madurai which was a Pandiyan kingdom. The second episode is shown to happen in a Chola Empire at Tanjore and the time period is disputed though some say it should have been around 2702 BC. The third episode takes place in one of the Pallava kingdoms dated back around 5th and 9th Century AD, where the Set up is mostly the king's empire, and the *Parnakasaalai* of Vipra Narayanar. Thus the setting is proved to be very vast like the other Epic tradition movies.

- **Invocation of the Muse**

The custom of the invocation of the Muse or the God is followed in this movie also. The individual episodes of the movie also start with an invocation song which is a special feature in here. In the beginning the song “Pallandu Pallandu” from Nalaira Divya Prabhandham is being used as the invocation of the God. The significance of the song is that it is being used as a morning Raga for the Lord, to wake up from Goddess Lakshmi’s lap according to Hindu mythology. Again to mark the beginning of the first episode on Periyazhwar, the narrator sings a bhajan on Krishna, another celebrated incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Also there is a song sung the narrator at the end of the episode.

Before beginning the second episode the narrator again sings a song “Maname Dhinamum Maravadhe” which roughly could be translated as a song that is sung to oneself to not forget about Lord Vishnu and his glory. Again at the end, the narrator sings a bhajan to mark up the end of the story and describes the moral of the story via the song. The third episode is different by marking the invocation not by the narrator but by the characters of the third episode itself. It greets the God, the king of the empire, the homeland also.

- **Theme’s statement in the movie**

The whole theme of the movie is loosely based on “Love conquers all”. All the three episodes speak about how much love the characters had for the Lord and the divine feel when the Lord answers their prayers back. The first episode shows true love in between Andal and Lord Vishnu, where she being a human married him out of true love. The second episode shows the deep connection between a warrior and Lord Vishnu and him turning out to be robber to build a temple for him. The third episode speaks about a poet who is almost like a slave to God and when he falls in love

with a woman, how does the God react. There are few other themes like the battle and revenge in the second episode when the Warrior doesn't find it in place to pay the tax to the king whom he was so close prior to his wedding. But wholly it speaks about Love and Lord Vishnu's glory to his worshippers.

- **Usage of Epithets**

- The first scene where Periyazhwar salutes God as “Perumane, Kanna, Maalane” and other names and thank him for have made him recite poems that got him a gold ornament from the king which no poet has ever got.
- During the scene when Andal grows up and the time when she is attains her right age to get married, she doesn't want to leave her father. So she calls him “You are my true friend, philosopher, guide and teacher who introduced me to Lord Krishna. How will I leave you and go?”
- In the beginning of the second episode when the warrior Parakalan comes inside he is being hailed as “The chief of all warriors, the bravest man among all” and later when he is being crowned by the King, everyone hails him as “The king of Thirumangai! The great warrior”
- During the beginning of third episode when the two dancer sisters pass by the Ashram of Vipra Narayanar, Devadevi's sister calls him as “He is the one who is a slave to God, He is a great soul, and he has crossed the ocean of wisdom.”
- The scene where Vipra Narayanar sings in praise of Lord Vishnu, he says “Oh the Lord who is black colour, the apple of my eye, listen to me and answer my prayers.”

- **Usage of formal speeches**

- The scene where Sivaji Ganesan, in the role of Periyazhwar describing about Lord Krishna to Andal, he uses many alliterations to explain how merciful he is and he also explains the meaning behind the name *Kannan* and thus gives a very brief and formal speech.
- The departing speech between Andal and Periyazhwar before her going and bonding with Lord Vishnu includes a very descriptive and formal speech, where he asks her to adapt according to what her husband does to her. Also he advises her that her husband is a person who at times would test the fellow person's patience and also a one who knows different magic. But still as a wife, she should be very amiable is his crux. This speech is very lengthy and formal and runs for more than 8 minutes on screen.
- The speech which is given by Thirumangai Mannan, Paragalan's wife to him on their first night, depicts the deep bond they share with each other and also his wife since talks about no more killings anymore it denotes that they are moving onto a special bonding after that day.
- The word war between Paragalan And his wife whether to go about a war against the Chola king or not is very descriptive and also seen as many alliteration used speech. The crux of the speech is that the king who does not like Paragalan's deed of using the public property to build a temple without

his notice wants to have a war against him. According to Kumudavalli, Paragalan's wife who hates violence wants the war to be dropped and hence they both have a word war on this regard.

- The scene where Vipra Narayanar speaks to himself after he being driven out by Devadevi's mother, as she understood that he was not rich. This speech is very formal, emotional and descriptive.

- **Divine intervention into human affairs**

- The first episode talks about a saint otherwise called as Azhwar whom Goddess Lakshmi wanted to see for real and how much love does he have for Lord Vishnu. Hence it is believed to be true that she was born to him as Andal and again at the end of the episode she gets married to him and thus there is a human intervening into God affairs and vice-versa as well happening in the case of Periyazhwar's life.
- In the second episode of the thief Paragalan aka the Thirumangaiazhwar, Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi come in disguise of a newly married couple to test the real love he has got for him. He thus teaches him a lesson when he is unable to lift the heavy jewellery of Lord Vishnu and transforms the thief into a noble saint.
- In the third episode where Lord Vishnu takes the appearance of Rangan, the helper of Vipra Narayanar and tries to Save

his love for Devadevi, there is again an intervention between divine and human affairs.

- **Usage of Tragedy and Pathos**

- The scene where the little Andal who treats Lord Krishna as her everything, wants him to play with her. She accidentally wears the garland which was dedicated to Lord Vishnu and when Periyazhwar sees this he immediately slaps her on her face. But still, the submissive Andal falls at his feet for committing the mistake. The scene is so tear-evolving and creates a sense of pathos amongst audience.
- The scene where Paragalan happens to have lost all his properties while building a temple for Lord Vishnu and begs from all his citizens but still unable to make it up to save such a huge amount. Even Goddess Lakshmi asks Lord Vishnu, that she feels so sad for him and she wants to know when He will be out of this tragedy. Hence this scene creates a huge pathos amidst the audience.
- The scene where Devadevi's mother asks Vipra Narayanar to leave her house and also she might use her men to drive him out if he insists on staying, he feels terrible and also wants to commit suicide that very moment. There is also a scene where he is being accused for have stolen the ornaments of Lord Vishnu from the temple and until the gallows, the audience have a sense of tension, and tragedy as to what will

happen to him and how will Lord Vishnu save him from the mishap.

- **The song sequences of the movie**

- There are totally 12 songs in the movie which come in a totality of 3 episodes, and thus it is 4 songs per episode.

Pallandu Pallandu	Seerkazhi Govindarajan
Krishna Krishna	Seerkazhi Govindarajan
Hari Hair Gokula	T.M.Soundarrajan, Master Maharajan
Kakkai Chiraginile	Soolamangalam Rajalakshmi
Margazhi Thingal	Soolamangalam Rajalakshmi
Vaaranamairam	P.Susheela, Soolamangalam Rajalakshmi
Kannanukkum Kalvanukkum	P.Susheela
Karaiyeri Meenvilaiyadum	P.Susheela, Soolamangalam Rajalakshmi
Gopiyar Konjum Ramana	T.M. Soundarrajan
Malargalile Palavagaiyirukka	T.M. Soundarrajan
Pachchai Mamalai Pol meni	T.M. Soundarrajan
Thirumal Perumaikku	T.M. Soundarrajan

- The first song “Pallandu Pallandu is from Nalaira Dhivya Prabhandham which is compiled by Nadhamunigal. This song is sung everyday in his temples to wake him, as a customary practise in the mornings. The visuals of the song is like the screen moves which shows the *Aaradhana* for the Lord Vishnu,

as he is seen at Thirumala Thirupathi Devasthanam. And the continuation of the song is “Krishna Krishna” which is shown be sung by the narrator to explain in detail regarding the episodes of the Lord’s glory. There is a change in the setting also which shows an indoor set up of a temple where the audience aka *Bhakthas* are sat.

- The next song “Malargalile Pala niram Kanden” is shown to be sung by Periyazhwar who sings hymns in praise of Lord Vishnu. The visuals of the movie are shown to happen inside the ashram of him, and the garden around the house. The whole song is a set of similes which compares the beauty of Lord Vishnu to the different coloured flowers of his garden.
- The next song of the movie is “Hari Hari Gokula” which is set to a raga called Kaapi which is Said to be one of the very favourite tunes of Lord Vishnu aka Krishna, and the interiors of The movie is a temple’s *Garbagruha* where the poetess Andal and her Father *Periyazhwar* sing together and also during the song, there is a time-lapse where Andal grows into a woman.
- The next song “Margazhi Thingal” which is taken from Thiruppavai, penned by Andal herself on Lord Vishnu during the time of her *Margazhi Vratham* which unmarried woman are believed to perform to attain a man of words. The scene of the song goes like she takes every friend of hers who live in the *Agraharam* to the temple to perform the Pooja and to show how much she loves Lord Vishnu.
- The next song which Andal sings in praise of Lord Vishnu, “Kakkai Chiraginile” penned down by Bharathiyar, famous modern day India’s poet which is again set to happen inside the

ashram they live. Also there is a dream sequence which is opening up at the end of the song, which shows the marriage scene of Lord Vishnu and Andal. The background score is fully given with the help of *Chenda Melam*, a Kerala Musical instrument which is used during marriage ceremonies.

- The next song of the movie "Kannanukkum Kalvanukkum" is sung by the thieves' troop of Thirumangaiazhwar inside their cave or hideout. The props used in this song are entirely different than the previous ones. The song displays the ornaments and precious gems whatever has been looted till date by the troop, stuffed animals as wall-hangings, and deer's horns and other weapons like daggers on their walls.
- The next song of the movie "Karaiyeri Meen vilaiyadum" shown to be sung by the dancer-sisters of the Uraiyur's kingdom involves "Nattiya Peroli" Padmini and Raja Sulochana dancing in the king's courtyard. The Song includes a set which shows a beautifully decorated castle where the members of the courtyard watch their dance eagerly. The tune of the raga is set in the Raga *Bhageshri* which is said to have a *Shrungara Rasa* that is used to depict a woman's feelings that are waiting for her lover. The emotion is thus symbolically representing that the Dancer Devadevi would meet her love soon after the song. Also it is said to be one of the very famous Ragas sung by Tansen, a great musician during the King Akbar's period. Thus the king of Urayur is being compared to him.
- The next song "Pachaima malai pol meni" sung by Vipra Narayanar is taken again from Nalaira Divya Prabhandham and is set to a raga of *Hindolam* and is a very soothing melody. The

visuals of the songs are set to happen inside the ashram of Vipra Narayanar and outside at the garden.

- The next song which is again set to be sung by Vipra Narayanar imagining Devadevi as Lord Krishna himself and thus sings in praise of him/her. Also there is another role of Radha (assumed to be) who also comes in the song and dances alongside Lord Krishna which again happens to be an imagination of Thondaradipodi Azhwar. The visuals are again the garden of his house and the light is brightly lit due to the happy mood of the song.
- The last song of the movie “Thirumal Perumaiku” is said to be the highlight of the movie which shows all the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu in a Vishwaroopam and ends with a message that there is another Avatar to bring back the justice and peace in the world and thus the glory of Lord Vishnu is a never ending one. The song is set in a Raga called *Madhyamavati* which is usually used as the *Mangalam* or the last song to pay due respect to all the Deities and this raga is thus chosen for the last song of the movie.

4.7.6 CHARACTERIZATION

- **The Hero**

The hero of the movie, Sivaji Ganesan has shown differences in each of his characteristics in the episodes of the movie. In the first episode, he comes as Periyazhwar, who is a divine saint, a very pious and religious man who lives by his words. The moment he finds a baby girl, he doesn't even panic and simply adopts her thinking it might be one of Lord Vishnu's divine game. Even though he had so much

love for his baby girl, when he saw her wearing Lord Krishna's garland he fumes in anger as he is very God-fearing by nature. Later when Manorama says a word about him not looking for grooms for his daughter, he is so taken aback and immediately like a responsible father, searches for a plausible person to get his daughter married.

In the second episode of Thirumangaiazhwar aka Paragalan, he is playing one of the very closest pals of the Chola King of that period but due to his imposing of new rules like the paying of taxes etc, make him furious and go against him. He is shown as a great warrior, and also the best husband for his wife. Whenever she asks him to follow non-violence he accepts it and tries to follow it. But when he runs out of cash, he starts to even ask for alms. Only when no one bothers to lend him money he starts to loot people. But when Lord Vishnu came in front of him, he immediately turns into a good person. Thus like the other heroes of epic, he is being the leader of a civilization.

The next episode where the hero plays the role of Vipra Narayanar aka Thondaradipodiazhwar, he is almost like a demi-God who is like a slave to Lord Vishnu. He gave himself to the God and lives only to serve him. Even when a woman came to him by saying she was sent by God, he immediately accepted her without any regrets. When his lady love's mother humiliated him, he still continued to leave the place without speaking a word, where he showed the quality of a man with mercy. Due to his true love for the God and as well as his lady love, he was able to even cheat death and God appeared in front of him for this very quality.

The above said was Sivaji Ganesan in the form of a demi-god whereas there is another Hero of the movie, who plays the role of God, Sivakumar. He comes in the role of the almighty that tests his worshipper's real Bhakti and its essence, he then saves them from the jeopardy.

- **The Villain**

There is no particular villainous portrayal in the first episode. Maybe since Manorama character and her husband kind of makes way for a chaos in between Andal and Periyazhwar, she could be considered as a temporary villain of the movie. In the second episode, the Chola King M.N.Nambiar who tries to set out for a battle against Thirumangaiazhwar he can be considered as the villain. But for a villain role, he is being much more merciful. He gifts a small kingdom to the hero, as a token of their friendship, but backfires when he is not willing to pay the tax. He lives under the principle of nothing comes of nothing comes for free. Though the role is villainous it is very temporary.

In the third episode, a woman plays the role of a villain and could be rated equal to a man. She comes in the role of the *Devadasi* Devadevi's mother who demands so much money and wealth in lieu of the true love between his daughter and Vipra Narayanar. She drives him out and hurts up by disgraceful words when he wants to visit his lady love. She displays her artificial character by accepting and inviting Vipra Narayanar again when she comes to know that he is claimed to be wealthy by his helper. But at the end, after she realizes the greatness of the holy saint, she regrets. Hence there is no particular villainous character throughout the movie.

- **The Donor**

In the first episode, the donor character is played by Goddess Mahalakshmi, who wants to see how Periyazhwar sings hymns in praise of her husband and thus gifts herself to him like a magic and is born to him. Only after the birth of Andal, Periyazhwar is able to attain a godly status amongst the Vaishnavites. And hence, she is the donor in episode one. Whereas, in the second episode the Chola king, M.N.Nambiar gifts a small kingdom to

Paragalan, as a token of their Friendship and also his loyalty towards him during every battle and thus making promoting him from a mere warrior to a king. After the status of king comes to him, he entirely changes his notions towards a war and thus M.N.Nambiar acts as the donor character in the episode two.

The third episode is little bit different where God himself comes down to Earth in disguise and takes up the form of Ranga, the helper who gifts a big box of golden jewels to Devadevi's mother to make her accept for their marriage proposal and to consider him as a wealthy person like how she had thought earlier. The donor is someone who gives the hero a magical property and assists him. Thus there are three donor characters of the movie, Goddess Lakshmi who selflessly gifted herself to Periyazhwar and to improve his life, the Chola King who gifted a kingdom to his friend and promoted him to come up and Lord Vishnu who came in disguise of Ranga the helper to save his devotee and get him settled up in life.

- **The Dispatcher**

A dispatcher is someone who sets the key character to the journey they should complete to attain success. It could be a minimal catalysing or an open statement that they deliver regarding the journey to be made by them. In this movie's case, in the first episode the dispatcher role could be fitted by Manorama who comes as another resident of the Agraharam Periyazhwar lives in. She is the one who often seems to gossip to her husband about Andal, who is not married even after crossing her age of wedding. This thus makes Periyazhwar to search her right groom and thus finding God to be the one.

In the second episode of the thief Avatar, when Paragalan is severely broke but is at the cost of finishing the building of temple he is tried to be robbed and one among the thieves leaves him a statement, "You also join with us, Steal, Rob people. Then they'll know your power." This statement often comes to his mind, and thus transforms him

into a thief. Thus the group of thieves could be considered as the dispatcher. Whereas in the third episode, the dispatcher character is being performed by the dancer's sister; during the first few scenes of this episode, when they both stop by the beautiful scenic beauty of the ashram of Vipra Narayanar, Devadevi challenges that she would make him like a slave to her but though her sister initially resists, later she also accepts her challenge. Though she doesn't openly give her consent, she wants her sister to be happily married with Vipra Narayanar. Hence she is the one who sets her to a journey and could be considered as the dispatcher.

- **The Helper**

The helpers in the first episode could be the other girls who stay with Andal at their Agraharam. They are the ones whom Andal seeks out when she wants to celebrate, or share happiness and also that they assist her during her day to day life activities. Thus they are the helpers' character in the first episode. In the second episode, the helpers are the thieves' troop who comes alongside the hero, who is also a thief in the second half of the episode. They all share the screen space together; whenever there are Scenes of looting the public money and also that they have a song sequence together. In the third episode of the holy saint Vipra Narayanar, Ranga is the role which plays the character of the helper to Vipra Narayanar. He is always There for him, during his Pooja times, when he is feeling all alone Devadevi bereft, also does *Sevai* to him and as well as Lord Vishnu.

Also that, Lord Vishnu takes his appearance to cheat Devadevi's mother and makes her believe that he is as wealthy as to what she had thought. Whenever his master, Vipra Narayanar calls he appears within a jiffy by mentioning "*Adiyen*" which in Pure Tamil means that "I am your slave"(roughly translated) and thus symbolically he denotes that he is portraying the role of the helper.

- **The Princess**

The princess role of the first episode is performed by Andal, who undergoes a deep penance to marry Lord Vishnu aka Krishna. She, right from childhood dreams about him, and talks about his *Leelai* to Everyone around her. She also performs the *Margazhi Vratam* which is usually performed by The Tamil women who want to get married to a beautiful lad, which she takes up imagining the God to be her husband. When her father asks her permission regarding her getting married to someone, she immediately comes up with Krishna's name which makes her dad go furious. There are also dream sequences to justify that she is the princess character of the first episode.

In the second episode, the princess role is performed by Kumudavalli (Sowcar Janaki) who comes as the wife of Paragalan. She is also gifted by the Chola King (The early practises of gifting woman like a land or an object is being marked up here) to the warrior turned King and who is later transformed into a human being by the princess. She is the one who explains him that it would make people miss their lovable ones, when he kills them in the battlefield. She asks him to give up the idea of setting up to war, and asks him to follow the path of peace. Those were the times when many of them wanted to be transformed into Buddhists and Jains during the Chola period. This is also marked by the history in here.

In the third episode, the obvious princess role is being played by Devadevi. She comes as the lady love of Vipra Narayanar the godly saint who is being challenged by her that he would become like a slave to her. Initially before knowing about him to a full extent, she challenged and displayed arrogant behaviour towards him but later, she also fell for him and there is a total transformation in her attitude and tone as well. She loves him from heart and also thinks that her mother would accept for the proposal. Later they both together serve Lord Vishnu, by means of Dance and Music.

The Princess' Father

Periyazhwar, who comes as Andal's adopted father performs the roles of hero And As well as the father of the princess' role. Usually According to the grammar of Vladimir Propp's characters of a film, the princess' father is the person who tests the power, patience of the hero but in here, since the hero of the episode is Lord Vishnu, Periyazhwar is being tested by him whether he is the right person to be the in-law to God. He gets angry when his daughter refuses to marry anyone and wants to Serve God. Also when Manorama gossips about him and accuses him to be a mere adopted father and that is the reason for him to not search for a right groom for his daughter , he feels totally taken aback like a responsible father.

At the time of sending his daughter to heaven for the marriage, he also gives a departing speech to his daughter about how well she should be behaving with her husband and it is also shown that he misses her so much after they leave at once. Thus it is being justified that the princess' father's role is done by the same person who did the role of the hero of the rest of the episodes of the movie.

4.7.7 PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE EPIC

- **Imagery**

- The scene where Periyazhwar finds a baby girl behind the Tulasi plant, he refers to the baby to a golden idol, which automatically tunes us, to compare the baby with that of a dazzling colour of gold. Thus it is a verbal imagery.

- The scene where Lord Krishna is asked by Yashodha, to show his mouth if he is mud-eating the visuals show all of the earth inside his mouth. This is an imagery which Depicts that Lord Krishna is omni-present and omni-potent. He is the creator of all.
- The scene where Lord Krishna is shown to have accepted the garland which Andal wore, it is depicted that he will one day wear her garland of wedding as well. This imagery helps us to relate the two and gives the audience a visual clue.
- The scene where Paragan is being surrounded by a group of thieves and one among them say that he should also start looting people which is the shortest way to get rich, the statement is often played like a voice over and thus acts as an aural imagery, which makes the audience to connect and understand that he might as well be changed into a thief very soon.
- The scene where Vipra Narayanar is sent to the gallows, but instead of his head being cut, the dagger transforms into a garland and thus acts like a visual imagery to prove that he is harmless. The audience understand that he is proved innocent and not a culprit.

- **Descriptive words**

- The scene where the little Andal asks her father about Lord Vishnu, Periyazhwar replies with descriptive words such as “ God of Gods, The one who shows mercy on everyone like the rain from sky, the one with a sky-high appearance, and his name

should be recited at least once in a day” thus explaining about Lord Vishnu’s glory to his daughter.

- The scenes where Periyazhwar and Andal describe their dream sequence about Lord Vishnu appearing their dreams differently, each of them explain with descriptive words about the incident. Periyazhwar explains, how he had Goosebumps after seeing the light of Lord Vishnu, and Andal explains how Lord Vishnu tried to wear the *Metti* on her finger and marry her, they both descriptive words.
- The scene where Kumudhavalli, wife of Paragalan explains the importance of the path of peace, she uses descriptive words to explain that both nation and as well as house front is important for a king and thus they both should be treated like his’ two eyes.
- The scene where Paragalan explains why his route of looting people is right to his wife, he uses descriptive words and alliterations such as ,

**“நல்ல முறையில் கேட்டேன், நையாண்டி செய்தனர்
வீடு விடாக சென்றுப் பார்த்தேன் வெளியே விரட்டினர்”**

- The scene where Vipra Narayanar sees Devadevi for the first time, they both speak with descriptive words, to express each other’s feelings. He asks her who is she, where is she from, what is her name, why is she there at his abode, What is her problem and what she demands from him in a literary style and she replies in a poetic form.

- The scene where Vipra Narayanar is being asked about the mistake he had “committed” he explains he is not the one, but would love to accept the stain on him if Lord Vishnu wants him to.

“பொன்வட்டிலை கருவறையாக கொண்டு விண்ணையும்
மண்ணையும் அளந்த பெருமான் என்னை வைத்து
விளையாடுகிறார்”

The above are the descriptive words; he uses to the King when being asked and thus accepts the gallows with pleasure.

- **Similes**

- In the scene where Periyazhwar finds a baby girl in his garden, he compares her with the golden plate and describes the beauty of the baby. Thus the simile here is the baby girl being compared to that of a gold plate.
- The song sequence where Periyazhwar sings at his garden, he compares the array of yellow flower to Lord Vishnu’s face, the red flowers to his feet and the white flowers to his white heart and thus these acts like similes.
- The scene where Andal is shown to be reaching out to Lord Vishnu, she is shown as a star, whose name and fame will always remain up the sky. Thus she is being compared to a star, and it acts as the simile.
- The scene where the Chola king, calls out for the warrior Paragalan, and hails him that he is like the God of death for all the warriors in battle field.” And thus compares the poet to the

Yaman who is considered to be the God of death and acts as a simile.

- The scene where Devadevi, asks if she can also stay with Vipra Narayanar to, Rangan, his helper he says “You’re not even looking a woman. You remind me a ghost.” Thus she is being compared to a ghost and it acts like a simile.
- The scene where the arrogant Devadevi tries to flirt with the godly saint Vipra Narayanar in their garden, she says “Like how the plant shows mercy to the Creeper, you’ve shown mercy to me and made me stay in your abode” where she compares herself to a creeper and him to the plant and thus making it up for a simile.
- The song sequence which Vipra Narayanar sings in praise of Lord Vishnu, as “Pachai Maamalai pol Meni” he compares the God to a huge, green mountain like structure when he takes the *Vishwaroopam*. Thus the green mountain is the simile here.

- **Metaphors**

- The scene where the little Andal asks her father about the Reason behind Lord Kanna’s name, he replies that “since, he takes care of us like his own eyes, he is named that way”, there is a metaphorical definition between the Lord and a pair of eyes.
- The scene where Rama, a close associate of the little Krishna, scares the neighborhood women when they refuse to give the

butter that they have at home. He says “Your head is like this butter pot for me, and I’ll simply break it if you ask us not to steal.” Where he metaphorically compares her head to the butter pot.

- The scene where Periyazhwar and Andal explains individually about their dream sequences, the former one has a vision that he had fallen at Lord Vishnu’s feet but The latter one has a dream of the God, clutching her feet to make her wear the *metti* , the toe ring and there is a metaphorical comparison of both of Their mind sets. One has dreamt about being almost like a slave while the other one wants to marry him. The metaphor here is between the two’s mental psyche.
- The scene where Periyazhwar delivers the departing speech to Andal, while she leaves to get married to Lord Vishnu he says “God is someone who knows the whole of the world in length and breadth. But the challenges for his wife are to know him the measure he knows about world and adapt accordingly”. Thus he metaphorically compares between a husband’s and wife’s responsibilities.
- The scene where the Chola King, gifts Paragalan, the poet one of his kingdom and also a girl whom he would be marrying, he says

“திருமங்கைக்கு மன்னனாக்கிய பரகாலனை

ஒரு மங்கைக்கும் மன்னனாக்கப் போகிறேன்”

He compares the lifestyle of a king and a husband and the different roles within the above Said lines.

- The song sequence where the group of thieves are dancing to the song “Kannanukkum Kalvanukkum” they are comparing Lord Vishnu to a thief who steals all his worshipper’s hearts. Hence there is a metaphorical comparison between Krishna and a thief.
- The scene where the thief aka Paragalan tries to lift the jewels of the people from whom he looted, he was unable to and Lord Vishnu at that time says, “this is your luggage of sin, so you can’t carry it that easily.” Thus the luggage is made to a dynamic metaphor to his sins with which he tries to build a pure temple for Lord Vishnu.
- The scene where Vipra Narayanar explains about the Lord’s glory to his helper Rangan, he says that “The scene of lighting reminds me the battling of eyelashes of Lord Krishna. The thunder’s sound is so like my God’s divine laughter. On seeing the divinity amongst his worshippers, it’s like Him dropping his happy tears as rain” and thus compares the three to the different attributes of Lord Vishnu.

- **Irony**

- The scene where Rama, a close associate of the little Krishna, tries to break in a house and steal some dairy products, he utters a statement that “Since, we fear for nothing, we have come to your house at the dusk” which is an ironical statement.

- The second episode of the movie shows that, the King Paragalan who goes bankrupt and also tries to ask for alms to his people, but not even a single soul helps him. The king himself with no disguise begs for money but his people who could not identify him and give him some money are so ironical.
- The scene where Andal sings, “Kakkai Siraginile” which is penned by Barathiyar who belongs to the 19th century and Andal belongs to around 3055 BC is so ironical and also gets the essence of the film very wrong.
- The scenes where Vipra Narayanar gets into the feel of love with Devadevi, though practically possible but is ironical as the divine poets are supposedly the souls who devote their lives to the Gods.
- The scene where the mother of Devadevi tries to drive away Vipra Narayanar she mentions “Can you please leave Sir” with a stern voice. She doesn’t mean to please him but also does not want to mess up with him on his first visit. Hence the tone of the statement is being very ironical.

- **Symbolism**

- The role of Manorama, the gossipier of the Agraharam is the one who is a deaf woman. This symbolically represents that she does not hear any good things around her and all she does is to gossip about all the people.

- The scenes where Krishna and Balarama are shown to steal butter from their neighbourhood have a deeper meaning within it. Butter is made by churning the yogurt made from cow's milk. Milk represents Upanishads which are the essence of Vedas represented by cows. The starter to transform the milk to yogurt or curd is the "desire to know about the Absolute". The extreme heat of one's spiritual sacrifice boils the milk and the desire itself acts as the starter and transforms the milk into curd.
- The second episode's hero "Paragalan" has a symbolic meaning within his name. The name when roughly translated means that he is immortal or belongs to a category that lives in all the three tenses. Also his wife who is shown to be the one, who guides him through the peace path of life, is supposedly the way of Buddhism. During those periods, the Chola kingdom saw many conversions to Buddhism and Jainism and the movie tries to portray this incident.
- The scene where Paragalan falls at the Chola king's feet denotes the image of Bagavat Gita's Krishna and Arjun. Both of them are good friends of each other, and the other one heads up in knowledge and acts like their partner's friend, philosopher and guide.
- The portrayal of Thirumangai Mannan, who turns out to be a thief, could be roughly compared with the English folklore character Robin Hood. Both are shown to be skilled archer, horse-rider and the ones who loot from the rich. The former gives it to the poor while the latter tries to build a temple with the money.

- The third episode, of the dancer's scenes where the sisters come in Red, denotes that they belong to the Devadasis clan. This is a disputed family where some of the people consider them to be pious prostitutes while the others see them as divine personalities who serve God with dance as its means. Those were the days, red was worn to denote a difference among the normal public and preferred by bold people and who wanted to be "looked at."
- The scene where Devadevi and Vipra Narayanar spend the night together at their Ashram and there is a sunrise shot which follows up, it symbolically means that they have been united by their fate and also this had changed her arrogance to simplicity.

4.7.8 COMMUNICATION OF VALUES

- **Love conquers all**

Periyazhwar who had divine love for Lord Vishnu, devoted the whole of his lifetime to serve him and also **Andal** who had a vision of getting married to Lord Vishnu, had followed a deep penance for the same and was listening to his stories since she was 4, was all because of the true love they had for the Lord. Though it might seem impractical if a human being could marry a divine figure, it shows that it could be possible if there is true love between the two.

- **Perseverance**

A warrior should be always welcoming hardship and should never fail to embrace failures. His grit and determination should have a band wagon effect on the other soldiers as well. Likewise, **Paragalan** who is a born warrior who is later transformed to a divine poet, has so much perseverance to build the temple for Lord Vishnu and thus goes in asking for people for alms and he also wants the history to speak about him and his focussed mission to build the temple.

- **Self-discipline**

Self-discipline includes celibacy, restraint of appetite, and various methods of training the body to withstand cold, heat, and other discomforts without the usual mental agitation. **Vipra Narayanar**, who put himself into deep penance and the path of worship towards Lord Vishnu, had all possibilities to get married to the dancer, Devadevi. But he chose to serve the God and thus was called as Thondaradipodi Azhwar. Self-discipline is entirely different from self torture. Doing something with one self's full dedication is self-discipline and that is what Vipra Narayanar did.

- **Compassion towards all beings**

This is one quality which is found in many characters within this movie, Thirumal Perumai. In the first episode, **Periyazhwar** who found a girl baby near his Tulasi plant could have simply forgotten the baby, but he took it and started growing her up. He had compassion (*daya*) towards the little one and hence accepted her as God's gift. Similarly, there was no compulsion for the Chola King to have gifted him a kingdom, but still on account of their friendship and loyalty. And in the episode of Vipra Narayanar where he accepts Devadevi without any hesitation, he displayed compassion

towards all the fellow beings which are one among the qualities of divine personality.

- **Forgiveness**

As the scholars say “மன்னிப்பது தெய்வ குணம்”, the movie talks about how merciful and forgiving natured, Lord Vishnu is. Every time he tests his worshippers, tries to give them some life lessons and make them realize what reality is. In the case of Andal, he forgives her for wearing the pure garland and takes her as his wife. In the thief’s episode, even when Paragalan tried to loot from Lord Vishnu, he forgives him and teaches him a lesson. Similarly, when Vipra Narayanar faces the gallows he changes the sword to a garland and blesses him. Thus forgiveness is also on among the virtue and values what the movie teaches.

4.8 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

4.8.1 PARAMETERS FOR SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents are chosen according to purposive sampling method so as to set to the features of the research. The chosen respondents mostly are above 40 in their age groups. Also only if the respondent has seen in the movie at least once in a theatre, he/she has been chosen for the study. This is so as to note down the different atmosphere created by a theatrical setup. Also of-course people who remembered what they saw before 3 decades were only considered.

The study did not want to create an artificial setting of a laboratory and the movie to be played again to record their observations as, it was initially aimed to have documenting only the old memories the cinema had left within them. The study corresponds to how much a visual image could leave a trail in them.

4.8.2 NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

The total numbers of respondents are 8 among which 6 were personal, one-to-one interviews and 1 was an electronic, via-email interview. They are,

- Mr. Theodore Baskaran,
- Ms.Vedha Gopalan,
- Ms.Bavani Baskar,
- Mr.Gopalan,
- Mr.Sudhangan
- Mr.Karthikeyan
- Ms.Vedha Srinivasan
- Mr. Durai Mohanan

The profile of the eight respondents is attached in the appendix of the thesis document.

4.8.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you ever watched the below movies of A.P.Nagarajan in a theatre?
 - a) Thiruvilaiyadal
 - b) Kandhan Karunai
 - c) Thirumal Perumai
 - d) All of the above

2. Was it a First Day first show?
If yes, why _____

If No, why not _____

3. Describe your experience watching the above said movies of A.P.Nagarajan.

4. What was your expectation before watching the above said movies? And was it fulfilled after watching the movie?

5. Whom would you prioritize for have watched the movie? Shivaji Ganesan or A.P.Nagarajan?

6. Are you a fan follower of someone/ some cast of the above mentioned movies?
If yes, who is it? _____

7. Are you a fan or more like a devotee? Did you feel they were really gods and demi-gods on the screen?

8. Did you learn some values from the movie? If yes, what were they?
9. Were the above mentioned movies your only source of knowing the values? If no, where else you had learnt them?
10. Do you think these movies made a good adaptation of the epic poetries like the Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam, Skandha Puranam and Divya Prabhandham respectively? What is your take on the intertextuality of the above said movies?
11. These epic tradition movies were also musicals by the category of their genre. Did you like them with so many songs?
12. What would you consider the unique selling point of these above said movies?
13. If it was not Sivaji as Lord Shiva, or Veerabagu would have you enjoyed it? Or watched it in the first place?

THANKS FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME

4.8.4 RESPONSES OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

4.8.4.1 Mr. THEODRE BASKARAN

“I have watched Thiruvilaiyadal and Kandhan Karunai alone. But it wasn’t a First Day First Show since I do not like to watch it that way. I watch

movies at my own pace. Well, to tell it in brief I wasn't quite impressed with A.P.Nagarajan's style of filmmaking. Also I did not expect much from his movie as I have already watched his earlier movies like Thirumalai Thenkumari. If I am being asked whom I would prioritize it is obviously Sivaji Ganesan. I am not a fan follower of any cast of this movie or outside the movies you have mentioned. Hence I did not feel like I am a Devotee or neither the cast were Gods and demi-gods on the screen.

When it comes for values, I personally think that the values I have learnt apart from watching these movies were more and those made me knowledgeable. Of course, this was not my first source of learning and I learn more through observations, books and discussions with wiser people. When it comes to a question of Intertextuality I must say that the director had a poor understanding of the text. The movies were like watching a merely photographed drama. “

ANALYSIS

From the above said lines of Mr. Theodore Baskaran, it is obvious that he did not like the movies much and also the director's concept of turning the Epic Literature into an epic tradition movie. It might be taken as if he could be an atheist or a mere critical commentator of films. Though his lens of watching the movie, the above said movies were considered to be a photographed drama like video materials.

The above interview was recorded as said by Mr. Theodore Baskaran over e-mails on 22.10.14 at 5:19 PM.

4.8.4.2 Ms. VEDHA GOPALAN

“I have watched all the three movies Thiruvilaiyadal, Kandhan Karunai and Thirumal Perumai in fact a numerous times. It was not a first day first show or even first week's show as I love to watch a movie in a peaceful

arena. I was very much triggered seeing the posters of Thiruvilaiyadal and Kandhan Karunai in particular and was dying to watch it. I still keenly remember how eager I was waiting for the first scene. I am this kind of a person who would love to watch every movie, be it a hit or flop right from the first scene or for that matter even the title card. But for these movies, I waited for almost every other scene I must say. The music which is so dominating in the movie right from the title card is something I adore in every A.P.Nagarajan's film. Mostly the music director for his movies would be K.V.Mahadevan who is again my all-time favorite. The card when says "Nadigar Thilagam" Sivaji Ganesan, it's done. It is like a current shock through my spine. The magnificence and grandeur look on A.P.Nagarajan's sets. Wow! I am sure. No one can replace it. He is like almost my era's Shankar (Director) (laughs)

The scene where Hemanatha Bagavadar and his troop play the song of "Oru Naal podhuma" I am sure no one can forget the number of musicians who played alongside the main person. So many Tablas, so many Veenas etc were simply mind blowing during that age. Or even when it comes to the song "Podhigai Malai uchiyile " sung by the Pandiyan Queen no one must have thought of huge decors like that. No one would have picturized that brilliant bathing scene. (Giggles)

After watching the movie whatever I expected was beaten up by what I got. I must say he is 100% a craftsman and knows how to get a work done from his cast and particularly Sivaji. I am unable to prioritize between these two. They both know each others' uniqueness and pitfalls and thus were great partners. I expected a mere Fast food before watching it but what I got was *Arusuvai unavu*. He is a director's delight. Though I am an ardent admirer of him, I am not a devotee. I am plainly a fan. But he is like at par to the God. Anyone can't simply bring Shivalogam in front of your eyes. I am sure if Sivaji Ganesan is replaced by some other actor I won't have watched the movie at all.

There are also values that I learnt from these movies and apart from this I got reiterated on Bhakti to be frank. But these movies were not my first source of knowledge because I read umpteen numbers of books being a novelist. The value which I understood was mainly “The wrong-doer will surely be punished. There is a presence of Karma everywhere. Also after watching the movie, I understood that all these Epic literature were not hoax and to be believed. When you ask me whether it is a boon or bane to have Mahabharata and Ramayana on our very own TV screens in the form of serials, I would really love to see them as they are very easy to watch and also to retrieve I always have a ready reckoner named YouTube. But at the same time, the power of watching Sivaji in a 70 mm screen is never matched by these small screens.

When it comes to intertextuality, the director has rightly chosen the essence of the literature alone and has added Masala and more pep to it so as to suit all classes of audience. In fact there has been a stigma that only Brahmins would love to watch epics and myths as they already might have known the literature. But director A.P.Nagarajan broke this taboo by infusing Sivaji Ganesan into the movie and added the cast value so that all the people and even laymen started watching the movies. These movies as you say were also musicals by their genre.

I would say the only two directors according to my knowledge that moved the story forward even during the song sequence was A.P.Nagarajan and K.Balachander. This is why people of those times did not go out during the song sequence like they usually do for a puff break or something. Though the songs were all Ragas based, people were able to relish the tune and I personally did not find it boring at all. I would also say that even if the title card does not contain the name of A.P.Nagarajan, I am sure to identify that which should’ve been his movie because he has his own style of movie-making.

ANALYSIS

According to Ms.Vedha Gopalan, she has been captivated through the combination movies of Sivaji Ganesan and A.P.Nagarajan thoroughly. She says she had also learnt many values, and hence the communication of religious values has reached the people to certain extent through these movies. Also, when it comes to intertextuality, through her words, the director has done a good justice to the original content of the text. But she says that she would not have watched the movie if Shivaji was been replaced and thus it means that she was more of a worshipper than of a fan. According to her, A.P.Nagarajan has been a successful *Auteur* as she had said in her interview that his signature is so vibrant throughout his movies.

The above interview of Ms.Vedha Gopalan was recorded on 23.10.14 at 13:55PM.

4.8.4.3 Ms.BHAVANI BASKAR

“Though I do not particularly belong to the age group when these movies got released in the theater, since my mom was an ardent admirer of Sivaji, I and she went to Shanti Theater when it got re-released and watched the movie. The other movie though I have watched, I do not remember clearly the characters in it. The first impression after I saw Thiruvilaiyadal was its grand opening and setting. I have never ever seen such a movie with those huge settings and backdrops, the jewelry, the costume they wore and what not; everything fascinated me. Being from a background where it was imbibed about the fear of God, I was actually scared for a close up shot of Lord Shiva when he saw Nakkeeran. I was driven to see this movie not because of neither Sivaji Ganesan nor A.P.Nagarajan. It was for the screenplay and the presence of the Epic tradition stories within it.

When it comes to Sivaji, he doesn't show his character separately. He almost lives in that role. For instance, if I want to imagine Lord Shiva, I would surely imagine Sivaji Ganesan only as everything other than this I have seen is in the form of a Lingaa. Hence I would see only his face. When it comes for learning of values, I should accept that I learnt so much. In fact this movie was my first source of learning. The character of Dharumi, who did not know how to write a poem, was so poor, but still stood against plagiarism when Lord Shiva was even willing to give his poem for him to get the prize money. At the end due to his pressure, he says ok. So through this what I suggestively understood was you should not dance to everyone's tunes, and if you are dancing, then it should be God's. At the same time through the episode of Dhakshayini I understood that even if they are Godly couple, the wife should abide by husband's rules.

One might call it as male chauvinism but it is not so. It symbolizes that even if you are the creator of everything, you are nothing in front of nature and that is why Dhakshayini is shown to be burnt alive. Even in the film, Kandhan Karunai, lord Muruga does not take the help of his friends to get married to Valli. This is because they all might be of the same age group and won't have a great mental maturity. If it is a blood relation and someone elder to him like Veerabagu, it is always better. Hence there should be no hide and seek in between family members. This is what I personally learnt from the movie. I would say, I really loved the fact that they were musicals too because people who do not even know the language were able to understand the emotion of the movie, and get to know the context it is dealing with.

The concept of giving Mahabaratha and Ramayana as tele-serials and that too as daily modules on our TV sets, is something I would not accept. Only if you have some craving towards something, you will relish it till the end. Now if I am being questioned about yesterday's Mahabaratha episode I don't even remember. Whereas

now I remember what color cloth did Lord Shiva in the disguise of the poet wore.
That is the power of cinema.”

ANALYSIS

Ms.Bhavani though does not belong to the previous age group, loves to watch Sivaji movies and the screenplay of A.P.Nagarajan. She believes that the unique selling point of the movie should be its screenplay and the grandeur feeling it delivers to the audience and the casts of the movie should just be like a cherry on the cake. Though she has not seen all the three movies that are being chosen for analysis she has watched two, of which she has devised numerous values out of it which she had learnt. Since she was a single daughter and was brought up by a theist's background, she was more relating to the content and her fear of God was neutralized due to the filming style A.P.Nagarajan added on to it. She liked the picture overall, and thinks that the director has done justice to the epic literature by making selected portions alone into movies.

The above interview of Ms.Bhavani Baskar was recorded on 23.10.14 at 3:44 PM.

4.8.4.4 Mr.GOPALAN

“I have watched all the three movies but my personal favorite is Thiruvilaiyadal. But neither of them were a First Day first show, as there would be too much crowd in there. I am usually a loner. I want to watch movies in a pin drop silence mode. Also the fans of some cast would whistle and engage in unwanted practices and thus I avoid usually going to the theatre on those days. Also since that I

am very fond of A.P.Nagarajan and his one and only famous dialogues. Not just for the alliterations used but the meanings conveyed through them are also very meaningful. I have watched Thiruvilaiyadal for more than ten to fifteen times and all the times I watch like I had watched for the first time. At all wherever I wanted to clap hands, almost all the audience clapped their hands. I usually watch movies many times to know how the audience react for the movie and thus have noted several people who have lost themselves while watching these movies. (*Sami Varuvadhu*)

I also found something new and innovative, what A.P.Nagarajan did in the movie Thiruvilaiyadal. He had given a competitive song to T.S.Balaiyya who was not even a hero but an acclaimed actor of those times, but still the movie was a grand success particularly for this very song. He was a risk taker and innovator his in every movies. The trick shots like 4 or 5 Sivaji Ganesan on a single frame etc was something mind-boggling during those times. The reactions he gives during the song though was similar to another classic of A.P.Nagarajan and Sivaji Ganesan, Thillana Moganambal, it was so enjoyable when he blinks his eye and immediately the waves of the ocean and birds flocking together stops (blinks his eyes like Sivaji and shows)

Also the name selection of A.P.Nagarajan is something that I adore. The scene when Hemanatha Bagavadar is shown to have many disciples, whom are named on famous Ragas he calls out “Hey Churutti, pack everything and come, let’s leave” the whole theatre burst out of laughter. All the scenes were like the casts themselves enjoyed while making and they also let the audience to enjoy them on screen. I have seen no single person get out of the cinema hall during the song sequences as they were also containing very interesting and new type of visuals during those days. Also in the film Kandhan Karunai I enjoyed the way Sivaji Ganesan walked and carried out himself. Only he can do that role. No one can even imagine doing it. The way he shakes his brows; at times one eyebrow alone at times both of them are so romantic but people

out there might consider them as over action. He is not over acting but kind of loud than the other actors because of his drama background.

He has a special name called *Senkanne* because the moment director wants him to have a red eye or want him to cry, he will immediately change accordingly it seems. But the only drawback in these movies was the quality of trick shots. When there were scenes of bows and arrows etc, there was the same set of arrows falling apart which were kind of boring after one or two movies. The universal themes of these movies were, the good person will be put into deep trouble always. Even when they are in huge mishap when they think of God, they will be immediately saved by The Lord. Overall, A.P.Nagarajan knows perfectly how to etch the character and bring it on screen.

ANALYSIS

From the above given interview of Mr.Gopalan, he is a very logical thinker and analyst of every movie, who has watched all the three movies of analysis over ten times. He has also said that the first few times, he watches for the filmy content while the rest of the times he watches for audiences' reactions inside a cinema hall. Thus proving him to be a deep thinker and critical acclamer, the responses what he has recorded was also more like in favor of A.P.Nagarajan's screenplay and Sivaji Ganesan's acting. But when asked for which one would he prioritize, he was unable to answer as he loved both of them as an *Auteur*. He feels that both have a certain tendency to carry over themselves on the screen and it is to be appreciated the way it is. Also he did not like the concept of tele-serials as it reduces the essence of Mahabaratha. He also says that though they give the same story and values, the costumes they wear are more revealing and thus ended up insisting on no values.

4.8.4.5 MR.SUDHANGAN PICHUMANI

“I am this kind of person who can’t even wait until the movie release if it is a Sivaji Ganesan’s film. I watch it mostly First Day first show or at least in the first week. The initial pull has always been Sivaji Ganesan for me. I always enjoyed the chaste Tamil of Shri A.P. Nagarajan, with his profound knowledge in Tamil literature especially the mythology! At my early day it was these type of narration of these stalwarts like A.P. Nagarajan developed my interest in Tamil and later I became a writer and journalist because of this inspiration! I am an ardent devotee of Sivaji Ganesan’s histrionics. All these films have quenched my thirst, took away my hunger! I would surely prioritize Sivaji Ganesan for have watched the movies you said. But it is also enhanced by A.P.Nagarajan.

I am one and only fan follower of Sivaji Ganesan or more like worshipper and devotee and what not. For me it is like the one and only Sivaji Ganesan. He was the God, demi-god and all the roles he carried out. He is pure personification of the Gods on the screen. There are numerous values these movies taught me. Yes it was Sivaji Ganesan’s movie which taught me Tamil, patriotism, mythology and history! His movie characters were my first teachers! These films were like learning alphabets, and then I slowly graduated into those subjects! I would say, the Director has adapted the literature what you have mentioned to the best way possible that too with so many constraints like time, filmic space etc.

And of Course! These movies were more like musicals. Those days even before seeing those films, songs were the visiting card to invite audience to the cinema hall. Those songs have definitely enhanced the quality of those films! The mastery of the lyricist like Kannadasan is really diamonds in the crown! The unique selling point of

the movie, if I must say then it is Sivaji Ganesan and A.P.Nagarajan There is some of the other epics like Agathiar! Though those films were good they are not much talked about! There was another director K.S. Gopalakrishnan who had brought out a mythology like Dasavatharam but it is not much remembered!

ANALYSIS

Through the above Recorded information shared by Mr.Sudhangan, it is so evident that he is a staunch believer of Sivaji ideology and also a great devotee of him indeed. Thus, this might also be one reason that he watches the movies above said, some umpteen times and still does not get bored. He shared that these movies were like A, B, C, D for him which made him to write his biography of Sivaji Ganesan. He says that he loved the film director due to the mythological Storylines he brought out and gave so much fodder to Sivaji Ganesan's thirst for Tamil. The views might be a bit biased as well, as he seems extremely addicted to Sivaji. He calls himself as "Sivaji pithan" (mad about Sivaji)

The above said interview was recorded on 23.10.14 at 4.14 PM.

4.8.4.6 Mr.KARTHIKEYAN

"People think I might want to speak about Sivaji Ganesan and his flair for acting, as I have been driving auto near Sivaji's house for around 30 years. But I am more attracted towards the director more than the actor. Because he is the one who gives him the dialogues, scenes to act etc. He is for sure the master of Epic films and he makes us glued onto the cinema seats. His famous characteristics were high quality Tamil and its delivery, the approach to different mythical stories, and narrating the events in a more narrative way than the other directors.

Always the themes of the movie were loosely on truth and following moral values and thus watching it made me think like I am a good person and who has good characteristics. Also his choice of actors was good and a visual treat to those days. “(Ends up by saying those were the days)

ANALYSIS

Mr.Karthikeyan is a respondent who seems to be lesser educated than the previous respondents of the study. But as there is no need for education to appreciate a movie, he put it right as to what he liked in the movies of the analysis. He is a person who drives auto near the Annai Illam auto stand. But he spoke more about the director than the actor and thus thinks only because of a director an actor could shine.

4.8.4.7 Ms. VEDA SRINIVASAN

“Those were the days when Carnatic Music had so much respect and was also recognized by various film music directors. Nowadays we hardly see pictures of a Carnatic music concert in *The Hindu’s* Margazhi Concerts coverage. And these movies gave a good entertainment factor for people like me who were craving for such music. Songs like *Oru Naal Podhuma* acted like the gate passes for the movie. While listening to the song itself one is sure to get its picturization and thus more people wanted to watch the movie. I am not someone who watches a movie on first day first show. I was grown up in a very conservative family and when I had even uttered a word about Cinema, I could be sued. Since these belonged to the Epic genre, we were allowed to watch and that too with parental guidance (laughs)

The way A.P.Nagarajan had taken the movie, was simply mind blowing I must say. Things like Lord Shiva's make up took them more than 3 hours every day because unlike today we lacked computer graphics. If a battle scene had to be shot, there really got to be around hundred people into the set and thus the set should be huge to contain such crowd. It cannot be duplicated like today. The next unique selling point of the movie is for sure Sivaji Ganesan. Today there might be critiques like, "He is over acting" etc but during those days only bold action were taken to consideration. Only then people understood. It is not that they were dumb but they acclaimed an actor only with his house as they had been exposed to too much of drama content.

When the movie *Thirunavukkarasar* was shot, Sivaji studied Adhisankarar, aka the Kanchi Periyavar to replicate the role and there was a banner of him while the movie was released. Adhi Sankarar while passing by, for a second got confused that it was his' banner. That was the amount of effort put by the actor those days. These days we at least have internet to publicize about the upcoming movies and there is also a lot of stardom around all the actors. But in those days, how much ever the actor is loud, he has a reach to the people. That is why Sivaji emotes so well and also at times gets criticized to be an over-doing actor. Also that people of those age, had no other entertainment other than cinema. Hence, if the movie is going to have much more songs than the movies what this Study examines, people were still ready to sit for so long inside the cinema halls.

As far as first day first show, or who is whose fan follower, I would say people rather women of my age, (70 years) were very hen-pecked and timid to even express their attraction and awe towards an Actor. Thus even if someone was a fan of an actor, we failed to express it thinking it was a sin during those days. Maybe men were a part of fan clubs but not were fanatics. Also Sivaji's audience were a bit different from that of MGR's audiences who always wanted more mass covering stunt scenes etc. Hence

there were only minimal audience who were a part of the whistling and howling crowd, the ones at the *Tharaiticket*. When it comes to values, people who were illiterates yet who wanted to know about the Bhakti tradition and the ethics of Hinduism were the most fruitful of the bunch. I would say, even if the movies got re-released I would love to watch it just for the actor and the director's way of storytelling.

The above said interview was recorded on 25.10.14 at 3.30 PM.

4.8.4.8 Mr. DURAI MOHANAN

“Sivaji Ganesan is believed to be an actor who was born to act in movies and drama. He is more like India's Marlon Brando, where once he has said that Sivaji could act like him, but he cannot replicate Sivaji. I have also witnessed many dramas staged by Sivaji, who acted first under Sakthi Nadaga Sabha company. C.N.Annadurai was the one who introduced him to the world of drama. Few people thought that Sivaji was not looking healthy like how a hero should be and thus he took a break from acting for about 3 months before the shoot of Parasakthi. But once he started acting he was unquestionable.

The Thiruvilaiyadal movie saw his stylish acting and alliteration filled speeches and it was made into a successful script by A.P.Nagarajan's good flavour of music and the Tamil literature. Few songs were also from the *Pathinen Sithar Paadalgal* which was one among the profound Tamil Literature. The other two movies namely Kandhan Karunai and Thirumal Perumai also had little deviations from the original literature. The scene where Paragalan is shown to be gifted with a woman named Kumudhavalli by the Chola King is actually modified. The first one to fall in love is Paragalan and thus his lady love asks him to transform to a Vaishnavite from Kshatriya and then they could get married.

Also in the story of Vipra Narayanar, Goddess Lakshmi asks Lord Vishnu that his devotee does not even know the difference between a woman and a man and thus he challenges that he will teach the sexual differences to his Devotee and thus Devadevi's characterization appears. Since I have had the chance to read the Nalaira Divya Prabhandham I got to know about the deviations. But it was accepted by the people because it did not hurt any religious sentiments of the people and also was made for a better screenplay and picturization.

The values that were learnt from the movie were mostly about the good and the evil powers within the Hindu culture. The virtue of keeping up a promise and to live by one's words was some of the values I learnt from these three movies. Sivaji is the hero of my heart and I am sure no one could replace his place and even now it remains void. When it comes to Sivaji or A.P.Nagarajan I would definitely chose the former.

The above Said interview was recorded on 28.10.14 at 10.30 AM.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

The study was set out to explore the Indian Epic traditions and how these have set the base for the Tamil movies of the 1960s and what are the values communicated through them. Also the study focussed on movies of the director A.P.Nagarajan who acted as an Auteur by embarking his own style of film making. The study analyses how the secondary epics have taken different shapes with respect to different stories in the Tamil movies of A.P.Nagarajan through narrative textual analysis of the three movies and examines all the scenes of the movie. It also looks at the characterization in accordance to the theory of Vladimir Propp, and discusses in detail about the eight chief characters that make a movie stand up. It also observes the values and ethics that are being communicated within or outside the narratives of the three movies that are taken up for the study. The study confirms the results with in-depth interviews of eight people who have watched the movies of the study in a cinema hall. Thus to sum up,

- Though there were little deviations from the original text of the literature, the Intertextuality of The movies was accepted by the audience, as they liked the way the film was said and because of the presence of Sivaji Ganesan.
- The characterizations, according to Vladimir Propp match with almost all fairytales and other stories and it also matches with the three Epic Tradition movie of A.P.Nagarajan.
- The values that were being said and re-said in the movies were mostly about fear of God, good vs. Evil, virtue of promise and women should abide by men

etc. These were also liked the audience of those days and some respondents have also expressed their personal experiences learning these values through the films.

- A.P.Nagarajan was also accepted as an auteur for the movies he made and the signature style. People have admitted that his movies has its own style, and some have even said that even before seeing the title credits they could figure out That it was his' movie. The music score by K.V.Mahadevan, the trick shots he designed at Sharadha studios, the magnificence he added to the screen thus makes him as an *Auteur*.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

Film is a powerful medium that can convey strong messages in a disguised form. Using the same formula or sequence in different forms becomes monotonous after a point. So if the aim of Epic tradition movies of the yester years was to kindle the forgotten Bhakti tradition, it could have induced many more film directors who wanted to try out movies under this genre. The depiction of the films, though is more feasible today than those days, the audience for the epic tradition movies today have been meagre. Respondents mostly have answered that they did not like the tele-serials like Mahabaratha which they think it is a mere exaggeration of truth.

The study has examined people who have already watched the movies in a cinema hall. Thus it would have unknowingly missed the observations of few respondents due to their ability of not remembering their experience of watching the movies. The future researchers may arrange for a group screening of the movies for the respondents alone and record the fresh observations so as to scrutinize more details.

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APPENDIX

6.1 LIST OF PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

THEODORE BASKARAN



- **Age: 74**
- **Profession then: Post Master General**
- **Profession Now: Film historian and wildlife conservationist**
- **Notable works: The Message Bearers, The eye of a serpent**

Ms.VEDHA GOPALAN



- **Age: 58**
- **Profession then: Novelist, Journalist at Vikatan**
- **Profession now: Freelance journalist, astrologer, keen observer of films**

Ms.BHAVANI BASKAR



- **Age: 43**
- **Profession then: Maths Lecturer, SDNB Vaishnav College, Chromepet**
- **Profession now: Vice-Principal, P.S.B.B Millennium School, OMR Road**

MR.GOPALAN



- **Age : 72**
- **Profession then: Journalist at Kumudham (30 years)**
- **Profession Now: Freelancer**
- **Pen name: Bhama Gopalan**

Mr.SUDHANGAN PITCHUMANI



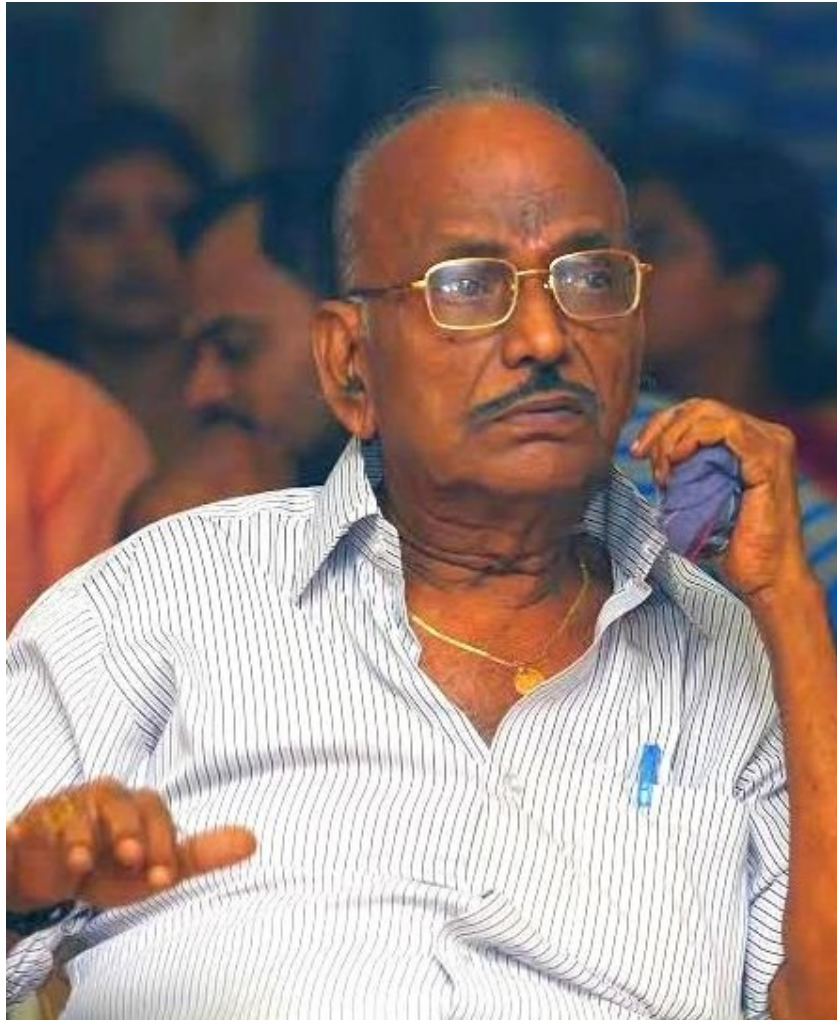
- **Age: 56**
- **Profession then: Freelancer**
- **Profession Now: Keen observer of Sivaji Ganesan, Political analyst, Writes biography of Sivaji Ganesan**

MS. VEDHA SRINIVASAN



- **Age: 70**
- **Profession then: Maths Teacher, Gill Adarsh School**
- **Profession Now: Retd. Home maker, Astrologer, Epic lover, writes a simplified Bagavat Gita for youngsters.**

Mr. DURAI MOHANAN



- **Age: 80**
- **Profession then: Sub-Registrar, Thasildhar's office, Vellore.**
- **Profession now: writes simplified Nalaira Divya Prabhandham**

6.2 PICTURES AND POSTURES OF SIVAJI GANESAN

These pictures and postures were shared by Nadigar Thilagam Rasigar Mandram and were taken during Thiruvilaiyadal re-release and Sivaji Ganesan's 86th birthday function at Shanti theatres, a family-run theatre of Sivaji.



**Pictures showing Nakkeeran and Lord Shiva (A.P.Nagarajan and Sivaji Ganesan resp.)
during the re-release of Thiruvilaiyadal**





Picture of the poster that was released during his 86th Birthday and even kids wishing him.

